

WALK WITH ME: CHAPTERS IN THE LIFE OF STÓ:LŌ ELDER ARCHIE CHARLES
(1922-2010) AND REFLECTIONS ON COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

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By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is both an analytical life history of Stó:lō Elder Archie Charles (1922-2010) as well as an academic reflection on the process of collaborating to record and write this told-to narrative. Grand Chief Archie Charles left a profound social, political and cultural legacy within the Stó:lō community. He is broadly acknowledged as one of the community's most respected modern leaders. My examination of the way Archie strategically accepted and rejected elements of the teachings of his ancestors and the lessons learned from newcomers serves to enrich a growing body of post-colonial scholarship that challenges long-standing assumptions about what it means to be Aboriginal. The agency revealed through his life experience alerts us to the dynamic way in which Archie and certain others of his generation balanced innovation with tradition. This study of Archie's life therefore, contributes to an emerging scholarship that challenges still lingering racist myths and faulty dualisms that position Native people as either "assimilated" or "resisting". Through Archie's story, I reveal the way in which he applied knowledge and skills he gained via the acculturation process (and his lifelong reflections on this process) to foster particular cultural continuities within areas of Stó:lō life. Archie successfully did this by enacting his own personal ethos of "protection through inclusion and education". This research chronicles and interprets the genesis and evolution of his leadership strategy by tracing it back to his adaptive interpretations of his ancestral and familial teachings and highlighting key times in Archie's life history when he worked to find a balance between innovation and tradition. Thus it foregrounds his formative experience with *Xwelítem* (newcomers) and Stó:lō society and cosmology, particularly his adoption, time spent attending Kamloops Indian Residential School, and involvement as a soldier and veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces. It highlights how he derived meaning out of these experiences, which in turn guided his actions in the public sphere and shaped his policies as a community leader –in particular as elected Chief of his community of Seabird Island British Columbia and as a *Sia:teleq* (a hereditary caretaker) of his family fishcamp in the Fraser Canyon. This research draws upon my own sustained dialogue with Archie Charles and his immediate family, secondary and primary sources, and previous oral history interviews conducted with Archie and his family members. It explicates Archie's role as a man who was known more for his actions than his words and the ways in which silence may be interpreted and made meaningful in the told-to genre. In terms that reflect the subtleties of collaborative dynamics that play out in told-to narratives, it likewise examines his role as narrator and authority of his life experience and my role as chronicler, then interpreter. As such, it provides glimpses into specific time periods and aspects of Archie's life, but does not seek to be fully chronologic and comprehensive. From this, I seek to contribute to collaborative historiography by sharing the way in which my collaboration with Archie shifted from a dialogue, particularly following his death in 2010, to a "polylogue": an engagement of multiple voices of family and extended community members to support this telling of his life narrative. Moving from hearing to a more engaged form of "listening" as we did – the kind which allows for silences to exist – reinforced for me that knowledge, expressed through words, gestures, actions as well as silences are not things we can go into a community or individual's life and "get". Rather, they are shared as gifts, and as such come with obligations of reciprocity. This dissertation aspires to reciprocate the sharing that Archie did with me by providing his community and my scholarly community with not only an account of his life, but with an assessment of what his life reveals about pertinent issues in Aboriginal and Native-Newcomer history – and through this process to hopefully contribute to the ongoing efforts at building reconciliation between settler and Indigenous societies.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Archie Charles and our families; those who are living, the ancestors who watch over us, and those not yet born. This is for all those who inspired these thoughts, which I carry with me from this point forward:

I give thanks to all the knowledge;

I give thanks to all the knowledge;

I give thanks to all the knowledge;

I give thanks to all the knowledge.

Here, There, and Everywhere.

We are all connected.

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INTRODUCTION



The sound of drums vibrated through our ears and hearts. On this day, August 28, 2009, at the Seabird Island First Nation gymnasium in British Columbia, on behalf of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, His Honour the Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia presented Grand Chief Archie Charles with the insignia of Member of the Order of Canada. He is the first ever member of the Stó:lō community to receive this honour. In one of life's "meant to be" moments, Archie was not well enough to travel to Ottawa to receive the award from the Governor General of Canada, so the award was bestowed upon him by then Lieutenant Governor of B.C., Steven Point, who in a particularly meaningful twist, was a fellow Stó:lō leader to whom Archie was connected through both work and genealogy.

And so it was, hundreds of friends, colleagues, family and community members bore witness to the event. Archie's recognition became a point of celebration and recognition of all Stó:lō people. In July 2008, I nominated Archie for the Order of Canada, unbeknownst to him. Typical of Archie's humility, when I called Archie to congratulate him, he remarked "Oh, those people called me last week and told me about some award, I thought they were pulling my leg". As I continued congratulating him, it seemed to start sinking in that he was receiving the award, as he kept remarking in a soft tone "Now, isn't that something."

This photograph poignantly illustrates the many identities Archie held in his community and personal life. Pictured in the photograph are dignitaries from the Government of Canada as well as Stó:lō leaders, educators and friends of Archie, and Steven and Gwen Point. The drummers and singers who "drummed us into" the hall are pictured standing behind the group. Archie is surrounded by family: by his side, life partner Tina Jack, back left is step great-grandson Zack Joe, step daughter Caroline Credico, adopted daughter (biological granddaughter) Rose Charles and me, his spirit granddaughter and research collaborator.

This dissertation is both an analytical account of the life of Stó:lō Elder and Grand Chief Archie Charles of the Seabird Island First Nation in British Columbia as well as an academic reflection on the process of undertaking collaborative research. Archie Charles was a remarkable man who left a profound social, political and cultural legacy—and not only for reasons that one might suppose based on his well-known record as one of the Stó:lō community’s most respected modern political leaders. Archie Charles led a life that not only challenges popular assumptions about what it means to be Aboriginal, but also our understandings of important aspects of the history of Native-Newcomer relations.

Straddling as he did the generation of leaders who came to prominence in the pre-WWII era and the post-1969 White Paper political activists and politicians, his life story offers a window into aspects of Stó:lō-Coast Salish culture, history and society that cannot easily be accessed through the eyes and memories of people on either side of this generational divide. After attending Kamloops Indian Residential School (IRS), serving in the Canadian Armed Forces in the Second World War (WWII) and protecting and nurturing one of the last broad-based, extra-familial community-orientated salmon fishing camps in the Fraser Canyon through his role as the recognized “*Sia:teleq*,”¹ he served as the elected political leader of his First Nation for 28 years.

¹ *Sia:teleq* is a word translating roughly as the ‘one who organized and coordinates a fishing site for one’s family and friends’. For assistance in pronouncing *Halq’eméylem* words used throughout this dissertation, see Appendix A: Guide to Pronunciation of *Halq’eméylem*. From Keith Thor Carlson’s, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), with permission of author. The late linguist Brent Douglas Galloway (1944-2014) worked extensively to record and revitalize the *Halq’eméylem* language. While the entire corpus of his life’s work has had an enormous impact on the preservation of language, the *Dictionary of Upriver Halkomelem* (Berkeley and Los Angeles University of California Press, 2009), based on forty years of collaboration with Halkomelem speakers is an invaluable resource to understand the language. Every attempt has been made to cite *halq’eméylem* throughout this

He was then honoured by Chiefs of the Stó:lō Tribal Council (representing 11 Stó:lō First Nations) with the title of Grand Chief, and externally with the Order of Canada. Archie Charles experienced much in his long life. (see **Appendix B**) But more importantly, for the purposes of this life history project, he carefully thought about the issues he faced during times of great change.

I consider it a great privilege, therefore, to have been invited by Archie Charles to collaborate in recording and helping to analyze and interpret his life history. For, as a member of a generation of Stó:lō and Indigenous people who were targets of powerful assimilationist policies and practices, Archie's narrative adds fresh nuance to our understanding of the sustained impact of colonialism on people's lives and turns to the voice(s) of those who were the subjects of that process. The undertaking of this research project (a life history situated within the 'told-to' genre²) and process (collaborative) at once supports Archie's role as the narrator and authority of his life experience, and my role as collaborator (first as chronicler, and then as interpreter). However as

dissertation using the current orthography. Given the fluid and dynamic nature of language, some past quotes reflect different spellings of terms. For example, the accent is different in the current spelling of "*sxwōxwiyám*" (the term for a kind of Stó:lō oral history narratives) which appears in past literature as "*sxwōxwiyám*". It seems this might be less an issue of spelling than it is a reflection of changing pronunciations since the orthography was designed by linguists to capture the way words sounded, with the changes in spellings likely reflections of changes in pronunciation. This would be different, than, for example, a change in the spelling of "tyre" to "tire" in English. It is more reflective of changes in pronunciation in English that were not accommodated by parallel changes in spelling, such as the typical mid-twentieth century pronunciation of "Los Angeles" which included a hard "g" sound compared to the current pronunciation that has a soft "g".]

² In *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and The Ethics of Collaborative Authorship*. (Vancouver: UBC Press: 2011), literature scholar Sophie McCall defines "told-to" narratives as those in which "typically, non-Aboriginal recorders collect, edit and structure stories by Aboriginal narrators." These narratives span genres to include "ethnography, recorded (auto) biography, testimonial life narrative, documentary, myth, legend and song." Sophie McCall, *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 2.

leading scholars in the field of Aboriginal told-to narratives attest, these dynamics are negotiated by participants and cannot go unmediated or unacknowledged.³ My aim was to craft this collaborative relationship in a manner that would help to fill the still existing gaps in traditional historical research that, over time, have failed to fully elucidate, illuminate and illustrate Indigenous perspectives and accounts of their own histories.

What is evident through this analysis of Archie's life is that although the scholarship of the past two decades has endeavoured to explicate Indigenous identity and to examine the relationship between Aboriginal people and settler/colonial society, there remain lingering myths of dualisms which divide people and history into categories of either "assimilated" or "resisting". Archie's life history demonstrates that he enacted, perhaps not always consciously, strategies which were not bound by such dualities, and which instead reflected thoughtful leadership that sought to better the lives of people in his community without regard to restrictive binaries. He was continually and appropriately innovative in various areas of his life. He utilized the ever

³ For recent scholarship that critically examines the dynamics between speaker and listener, see: Laura J. Murray (Editor) and Keren D. Rice (Editor), *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division; 1st Printing edition 1999) and more recently, *Literacy and Orality: Reflections Across Disciplines*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson, Kristina Fagan and Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011). Two recent told-to narratives of Coast Salish Elders add depth and breadth to the genre. See: Rena Bolton and Richard Daly, *Xwelíqwiya: The Life of s Stó:lō Matriarch*. (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2013) and *Written as I Remember It Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*, Elsie Paul, in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).

growing knowledge and skills he gained via his lifelong reflections on the assimilative process to foster ways that consciously sought to strengthen what he regarded as core elements of Stó:lō culture.

A number of issues have been raised by both Aboriginal peoples and scholars (particularly historians and anthropologists) regarding the limitations of authoritative and generalized Indigenous histories of the past, both in terms of content and form.⁴ Contrary to the previous generation of written Native histories, which aimed principally to present and analyze the impacts of newcomers on Native people, this dissertation responds by creating space for a more complete voice from a member of a particular generation and community of Indigenous people while allocating value to the teachings that those experiences and perspectives provide. In doing so, it seeks to provide new insight into how a particular member of an Indigenous community made personal and cultural meaning out of his colonial encounters. By joining the growing number of scholars who have recognized the value of inverting the traditional historical gaze of ‘newcomer to Native’⁵ to focus instead on Native perceptions of newcomers, this

⁴ In the late 1970s and early 1980s, authority of authorship in anthropological research was challenged by a number of scholars whose work exemplified a new way of thinking within the discipline. The argument that research epistemology and methodology must embody and reflect the participation of the researcher as well as the social and political context wherein the research takes place has been posited by a number of scholars. Several books advanced this critique, in particular Johannes Fabian’s text: *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Objects* (1983), historian James Clifford’s, *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (1988), and James Clifford and anthropologist George Marcus’, *Writing Culture: Essays on the Poetics and Politics of Culture* (1986).

⁵ The 1970s produced precedent-setting historical and anthropological texts that continued to shape the discourse related to doing research with First Nations over the coming years. In that decade, Anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s influential work, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), advocating ethnohistorians’ and ethnographers’ use of “thick description” as a methodological tool to make their representations

dissertation will further add to the ongoing process of demolishing long-held myths, assumptions and prejudices about Indigenous experience, thereby creating a more accurate historical record and better potential for social justice.

A principal assertion of this study is that through the process of engaging in a collaborative research project, the extent to which the research process directly informs the products and outcomes of research becomes evident. While an increasing number of collaborative research methodologies seek to support meaningful community engagement, there is still a gap in transparent historical texts that articulate the way the research process unfolds and the ethical dimensions of fieldwork. Though anthropology has a longer tradition of applied fieldwork⁶ methods than does the discipline of history, currently there are innumerable projects wherein historians are working cross-culturally to co-produce Aboriginal histories. The two disciplines are therefore enriching one another as never before. In this, my ethnohistorical approach, I maintain a deep concern about research products gaining emphasis over the research process, particularly in works in which collaboration to record Aboriginal oral history and tradition are central. This conviction is echoed in the words of English scholar Sophie McCall:

Told-to narratives cannot be romanticized as unmediated oral tradition, nor can they be dismissed as corrupted texts. Rather, a collaborative approach acknowledges the volatility of relations of authority between

of culture, was published, as was historian Hayden White's canonical text, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

⁶ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 24. For a further historiographic overview of the development of "fieldwork" as the methodological norm for anthropological research during the first half of the century, also see anthropologist Michael Herzfeld's *Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society* (Malden Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001).

recorders, tellers, interpreters, and editors, and emphasizes the process of making told-to narratives as much as the product itself.⁷

The value of the gift of time, words, knowledge, memories and personal truths shared by individuals and families via research cannot be sufficiently underscored. It is desirable to maintain a balance between the products and process of research but this equilibrium is especially important in those projects involving Aboriginal people, who have experienced colonization in many forms, including past research from which they did not benefit. After a decade of community-based research, I have come to recognize that collaboration with First Nations peoples works best when it is conducted in a fully engaged listening methodology that reflects a deep respect of local cultural protocols. It is through these protocols that one is provided not only glimpses but perhaps opened windows into the ordering and structure of Indigenous thought processes that make knowledge knowable across cultural gulfs.

In response to this recognition, this dissertation has two goals. The first is to present and critically interpret the relationship between Archie's told-to life narrative and Stó:lō and Indigenous history. That is to say, I am seeking to relate and interpret key aspects of Archie's life history for what they reveal about larger issues relating to Stó:lō and Indigenous history more generally. For in addition to telling us about the sustained and personal effect of government policy and practice, Archie's life story holds the promise of teaching us something about agency, changing cultural traditions, contemporary expressions of self-determination and the functioning of self-governance among First Nations peoples. In doing so, it contributes to new scholarship that undermines popular myths and long-held assumptions of First Nations peoples that place tradition and innovation at odds with one another in the shaping and expression of cultural

⁷ McCall, *First Person*, 13.

identity and history.⁸ Through this life narrative, the experience and perceptions of an influential, and sometimes controversial, member of his generation of Stó:lō people are transmitted to non-Native audiences and the narrative itself intermingles with the oral memories that exist within Stó:lō society. This provides an opportunity for a more nuanced view of Stó:lō history that more fully accounts for an insider perspective than has been available through older standard ethnographies and histories.

The second goal of this work is reflexive; to present and critically interpret the collaborative research process undertaken to record, write, frame, represent and interpret Archie Charles' history. In doing so, my hope is that an assessment of our collaborative relationship offers an opportunity for additional insight into Archie's life and also reflection on the nature of

⁸ Scholarship about the tension between innovation and tradition in modernity has been an area of interest to anthropologists, historians and post-colonial scholars since the 1980s. Some notable examples that have influenced this research include Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1996); Jean-Guy Goulet, *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power Among the Dene Tha* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); and Keith Thor Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," in *New Histories for Old*, edited by Ted Binnema and S. Neyland (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007). Inspired by her work with Aboriginal people in Canada and Australia, Canadian anthropologist Valda Blundell uses the term "innovative traditionalism" to refer to a "traditionalism which is continually negotiated in the discourse and practice of everyday life." Valda Blundell and T. Bennett's "First Peoples: Introduction." *Cultural Studies*, 9 (1), 1995: 4. In *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009) anthropologist Diane M. Nelson explores the fluid and multiple expressions of both individual and cultural identities in post-war Guatemala. Of special interest is her discussion of the role that jokes and stereotypes play at setting in place assumptions about cultural identity. Particularly in relation to how Archie sought to actively engage his cultural traditions using modern tools and resources, Stl'atl'imx poet-scholar Peter Cole's articulation of Indigenous peoples' process of "traditionalizing modernity" in *Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing: Coming Home to the Village* (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006) resonates clearly.

this particular expression of the ethnohistorical research process: how he acted as editor, translator and narrator of his story and how our relationship shaped what memories he sought to include and exclude. Throughout this dissertation, I present and analyze the adjustments I made to my sources and interviewing techniques over our years of working together. Such adjustments became of particular significance once Archie passed away in November 2010. For example, Archie favoured speaking about particular experiences in his life (family, leadership, fishing) while he did not fully explicate others (residential schools, military action). This required that I adapt my approach to better ensure that Archie remained the central subject and narrator of his life history, according to his personal comfort level. Our deeply engaged form of research provided me an opportunity to interpret not only Archie's words, but also his actions, gestures and particularly his silences, in ways that a single life history interview would not. It also opened up a matrix of family and community relations which enabled me to engage in supplementary interviews thereby adding further depth to this process.

River People: Stó:lō Collective Identity and History

“Stó:lō is the name for *Halq'eméylem* - speaking peoples living along the lower 170 kilometers of the Fraser River in Southwestern B.C.”⁹ (see **Appendix C**) Further, “Stó:lō traditional lifeways, past and present, have centered on the Fraser River and fishing, a pattern that has persisted for millennia. Not surprisingly, the Fraser River and salmon are the core of

⁹ Thomas McIlwraith, “The Problem of Imported Culture: The Construction of Contemporary Stó:lō Identity.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 20:4 (1996): 41-70: 46.

Stó:lō culture.”¹⁰ “Salish” is a reference to the linguistic family of which the Stó:lō are a part. Nineteenth century ethnographers Charles Hill-Tout and Franz Boas both made this point, as did others like James Teit who worked in the interior of British Columbia. The term “Stó:lō” first appears in print as a reference to the Coast Salish of the lower Fraser in the 1880s in the writings of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI). Stalo, from *sta.lew* (upriver *Halq’eméylem* dialect), or *stalew* (downriver and island *Halq’eméylem* dialect), was used by anthropologist Wilson Duff (1955a:11) for the people of the Fraser Valley and lower Fraser Canyon. More specifically, *Halq’eméylem* is “one of the languages spoken by the Coast Salish peoples of the southern Northwest Coast. *Halkomelem* is the native language of the Stó:lō of the lower Fraser River watershed and their relatives and neighbors from southeastern Vancouver Island. It is made up of three dialects - *Hul’q’umín’um* ('Island' Halkomelem dialect), *Hun’qumyi’num* ('Downriver' Halkomelem dialect) and *Halq’eméylem* ('Upriver' Halkomelem dialect).”¹¹

Outsider scholars are not the only ones who have been working to identify and interpret Stó:lō cultural traditions and identity. Formerly the Stó:lō Aboriginal Rights and Title Department, the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (“SRRMC”) is a semi-independent research organization located on the Stó:lō Nation grounds in Chilliwack, B.C. that conducts research on behalf of Stó:lō communities. The *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual*¹², one of

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Stó:lō Nation Aboriginal Rights and Title Department. *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* (Sardis, B.C., 2003), 7.

¹² The *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* was developed in 2003 by the Stó:lō Nation with the goal to “preserve, protect and manage Stó:lō heritage in all its forms—in a manner consistent with Stó:lō values, beliefs and traditions.” (Stó:lō, *Policy Manual*, 2) The forward to the *Heritage Policy* illustrates the goals of such policies and practices: “Stó:lō heritage is complex and dynamic. We carry on and express our traditions in relation to the ever changing world of which we are a part. This policy manual is a living document which reflects our views of heritage.” (2) The *Policy*

the Department's publications, articulates Stó:lō identity in relation to Aboriginal Rights and Title: "We, as the Stó:lō, are a collective community who hold rights and title within all *S'olh Téméxw* (our world)."¹³ Further to that, "The connection between past and future rests with those of us living today."¹⁴ Understanding the idea of continuity and connectedness underlying Stó:lō caretaking responsibilities - evident in Archie's role as *Sia:teleq* (a caretaker of his family fishing site) - is complemented by the concept literature scholar Jack Healy refers to as autochthony, defined as "being connected to the earth in a manner that precedes memory."¹⁵ For Healy, the implication of the concept of autochthony relates to a "sense of roots in the earth as sacred; but to refer to the sacred is to refer to a conceptual, mythological space."¹⁶ This element of Stó:lō cosmology that necessitates action and responsibility by Archie Charles and other members of the Stó:lō community in the present, results from the interconnectedness not only between past and future, but also between time and place. In lieu of a focus on romanticized notions of "past", an emphasis on the agency of individuals in the present to interpret and reflect upon tradition and connection to place is observed in literature on autochthony and informs this work:

(I)t is not so much the fact that one's forbears have lived continually in one place with a shared history that guarantees the stability of one's own existence: it is rather that the

Manual is but one initiative undertaken by the greater Stó:lō community aimed at engendering accurate and respectful knowledge of Stó:lō culture via the implementation of controls over the research process as well as the management of Stó:lō heritage within the community.

¹³ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ J.J Healy, "Literature, Removal and Theme of Invincibility in America: A Complex Fate Revisited." *Dalhousie Review*, Spring (1981): 127-141: 129.

¹⁶ Ibid.

total body of reflections which have been given cultural expression by one society as a consequence of that history is supported by place.¹⁷

The consequence of this reflective process is that the integration of place, space, time and history is apparent in the following Stó:lō articulation of time and place: “We view our place and actions in the world as the center of a continuum extending seven generations past and seven generations forward.”¹⁸

The *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* illuminates the dichotomy between myth and present age expressed in Stó:lō cosmogony: “We were put here by the Creator, *Chichelh Siyá:m* but the world was chaotic. So *Xexá:ls* (the Transformers) and *Tel Sweyel*, (Sky-Borne¹⁹ People) came to make the world right and transform it to its present form.”²⁰ Prominent Salish scholar Wayne Suttles notes that:

Traditions of local groups usually told how the group’s founder dropped from the sky, where the Transformer gave him technical or ritual knowledge, and where he established special relationships with local resources. Marriage with non-humans establishes an affinal relationship with obligations of reciprocity.²¹

One way the inextricable relationship between Stó:lō people and resources²² throughout *S’ólh Téméxw* is conveyed is through ancestral or “Indian” names²³, which I have earlier contributed to describing in these terms:

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 2.

¹⁹ Note spelling variations “Sky-Borne” (1) and “sky-born” (37) within the *Policy Manual*.

²⁰ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 1.

²¹ Wayne Suttles, “Central Coast Salish”, in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7*, edited by William Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 453-475, 466.

²² Some such resources include salmon fishing spots, berry patches, gravesites and burial sites, hunting areas, medicinal plant harvest areas, ceremonial knowledge and/or regalia and specific oral narratives.

²³ Stó:lō ancestral names are included in brackets next to English names when known by me.

Ancestral names are an integral aspect of Stó:lō identity, history and culture and constitute the core of caretaking responsibilities. Ancestral names are names carried by members of previous generations and given to individuals when they are deemed to be ready to carry the rights and responsibilities attached to that particular name. Potential ancestral names suitable for an individual are chosen by Elders, (typically grandmas), who carry the knowledge of the character traits and life skills and knowledge associated with the particular ancestor. The name is then presented to the individual in a ceremony witnessed by members of the immediate family and greater community, (referred to as ‘being covered with a name’).²⁴

The reciprocal relationship between land and humans expressed in Stó:lō oral history and structured in ancestral names constitutes a key type of Stó:lō local knowledge.²⁵ To understand

²⁴ Meagan Gough and Dave Schaepe, *Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Land Selection and Jurisdictions: A Pilot Study of Stó:lō Family and Tribal Relations and Systems of Caretaking Land and Resources Throughout S’ólh Téméxw*. Prepared and submitted on behalf of the Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association (December 9, 2011), 17.

²⁵ “Local Knowledge” is a central concept in anthropology first popularized by influential anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1983 work of the same name. The term describes the shared views, knowledge and practices of people who live in the same place and has particular value for comprehending the significance of the concept. It has been revitalized in innovative ways by contemporary scholars, exemplified by cultural linguist Keith Basso’s life history of an Apache Elder, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). In this work, Basso extends “local knowledge” declaring: “senses of place, while always informed by bodies of local knowledge, are finally the possessions of particular individuals. People, not cultures, sense places...and do so in varying ways.” (Basso, *Wisdom Sits*, xvi) Canadian anthropologist Julie Cruikshank’s work, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005) further defines “local knowledge” as that which “refers to tacit knowledge embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behavior and speech.” (Cruikshank, *Glaciers*, 9) Describing the powerful connection between local knowledge and geography, she asserts: “A growing body of research about social memory argues that landscapes are places of remembrance and that culturally significant landforms may provide a kind of archives where memories can be mentally stored.” (Cruikshank, *Glaciers*, 11) As Cruikshank further remarks: “All knowledge is incontrovertibly local.” (Cruikshank, *Glaciers*, 11) In her 2005 work *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*, Canadian historian Kerry Abel similarly discusses how diverse notions of community in Porcupine-Iroquois Falls developed over time via what she describes as the residents “mental mapping” process of the land. Archie’s understanding of S’ólh Téméxw, particularly the Fraser Canyon and Five Mile Fishery where the hereditary fishcamps are located, takes into account more than topography. The “mental maps” Stó:lō fisherman like Archie create include intersections

Stó:lō culture in terms of participation in the contemporary world reflects a shift in research epistemology, wherein constructions of history become ancillary to geography (place), not time (chronology). Seen from this perspective, the Fraser River acted as a third entity in this study.

As a teacher, the River has gifts and teachings for Stó:lō people as well as gifts I am thankful to have experienced myself. Cross-cultural collaborative, qualitative research as I have experienced it over the past 10 years requires that the researcher shift position from outsider to perhaps something more akin to a sojourner. While my relationship to *S'ólh Téméxw* and the River is different from Archie's, it exists, and is central to this work. This relationship is based on my own "sense of place" (as linguist Keith Basso described it in his work among the Apache) derived from learning experiences with the River over time that engaged my imagination, heart, mind, body and spirit. Time spent in this manner (through "sensing") helped build a context for my learning and, as such, collaboration and place are inextricably linked to the creation of this work.

After the arrival of non-Stó:lō people (*Xwelítem*) in Stó:lō territory, a series of divisions of *S'ólh Téméxw* took place, none of which recognized or acknowledged Stó:lō people's understandings of place and human-nature relationships. In particular, the US/Canada Boundary was established in 1846, and in 1858 a reserve system was imposed in Stó:lō territory by the Colonial Government. The irreversible impact of the creation of reserves on the collective Stó:lō community is expressed in contemporary land claim negotiations for Rights and Title to Stó:lō

between the natural and the man-made, people and animals, time and space, and influence not just people's lives, but also the ways in which they remember their lives, and thus, tell their stories.

territory. In Canada, Stó:lō people presently live on (as well as off) a number of reserves within *S'ólh Téméxw* along the Fraser River in Southwestern British Columbia. Contemporary political, legal and cultural definitions of what constitutes the collective Stó:lō community reflect the historical divisions of Stó:lō territory. As a result, an important way that the relationship between Stó:lō people and their territory is currently understood is in terms of Rights and Title. This relationship is clearly expressed in the following statement: “We, as the Stó:lō, are a collective community who hold Rights and Title within all *S'ólh Téméxw* (our world).”²⁶ Currently, the Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association,²⁷ the Stó:lō Tribal Council,²⁸ and remaining non-affiliated or independent Stó:lō bands²⁹ seek to assert and legitimize Stó:lō self-determination over cultural resources in *S'ólh Téméxw*. Archie Charles’ home First Nation of Seabird Island is currently a member band of the Stó:lō Tribal Council. The colonial history of Seabird Island reflects the continued impact of reserve creation on people’s lives and will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

²⁶ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 2.

²⁷ The Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association, “SXTA” currently represents seven of twenty-four Stó:lō band level communities in Treaty: Aitchelitz, Leq’á:mel, Popkum, Skawahlook, Skowkale, Tzeachten, and Yakweakwoose. The Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association is a separate entity from the Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council Government service delivery organizations.

²⁸ The Stó:lō Tribal Council was incorporated on July 21, 2004 by 8 First Nations; however as of 2013 they had stepped down from the Treaty table, choosing to pursue Stó:lō Aboriginal Rights and Title outside of this system. The Council’s mandate, like that of the Stó:lō Nation Society, is to provide representation and governance for its member First Nations in such areas as education, social development, community development, child and family services, employment, economic development, health, advisory services, fisheries, Aboriginal Rights and Title, treaty negotiations and *Halq’eméylem*. The member bands include Seabird Island Band, Soowahli, Cheam, Shxw’ow’hamel, Chawathil, Kwaw’Kwaw’Apilt, Kwantlen, and Scowlitz.

http://www.stolotribalcouncil.ca/stc_communities.html (download date April 15, 2013).

²⁹ Refers to those Stó:lō band-level communities not affiliated with SXTA or Stó:lō Tribal Council.

While Canadian government allocations of band status include one or more numbered reserves scattered throughout *S'olh Téméxw*, prior to the imposition of the reserve system, movement of Stó:lō people between villages or communities was very common. This is not to imply that certain people (tribes, families, etc.) were not more intimately associated with certain landscapes than others within the broader territory, but that there were processes in place that enabled people to expand affiliations or to exit one affiliation and join another – actions that often found expression in movements on the landscape. The cultural significance of continual movement and interconnectedness between Stó:lō people, despite changing legal and political definitions of community, is reiterated by Clem Seymour, current Stó:lō Chief of Seabird Island: “We can’t just say that we are from a single Indian Act band. Look at where our grandparents lived and moved to. We are all connected. We are *Stó:lō*’.”³⁰ These emergent definitions of community are discussed in literature regarding contemporary Stó:lō identity, where it is stressed by anthropologist Thomas McIlwraith that Stó:lō “rely on multiple expressions of their identity suitable to fit into the contemporary B.C. political and economic environment.”³¹

Stó:lō Oral Narratives: *Sqwélqwel* and *Sxwōxwiyám*

An integral part of why Archie Charles is highly regarded within his community (attested to in part by his 28 consecutive years as the elected Chief of Seabird Island community), by his family and as a *Sia:teleq*, can be attributed to his detailed understanding and knowledge of his

³⁰ Clem Seymour, quoted in Sonny McHalsie, “Intergenerational Ties and Movement” In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 32-33, 32.

³¹ McIlwraith, “Imported Culture”, 42.

history and genealogy - his “*sqwélqwel*.” There is a connection in Stó:lō society between one’s *sqwélqwel*, class and cultural authority. Thus, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of the types of Stó:lō oral history in order to contextualize Archie’s life history, his role within the community and the impact this had on recording his oral history in this research project. Useful to a discussion of Aboriginal oral narratives is the contribution of Indigenous scholar Donald Fixico, who distinguishes Indigenous oral history as “the content of the event told orally”, which he identifies as “the communicative process or vehicle for transmitting this same reality of past to present.”³² He adds that the oral tradition of Native groups can exist in various forms, including “oratory, myths, legends, songs, parables, and prophecy.”³³ Fixico’s discussion also alerts us to how the content and form of oral narratives are inextricably linked and subject to local cultural protocols for their transmission.

There are two forms of oral narratives in Stó:lō culture, which differ in both form and function. The first is *sxwōxwiyám*, defined in the *Stó:lō Policy Manual* as “oral histories that describe the distant past ‘when the world was out of balance, and not quite right’. *Sxwōxwiyám* account for the origins and connections of the *Stó:lō*, their land, resources and *sxoxomes* (‘gifts of the creator’).”³⁴ Of great consequence is that:

Stó:lō oral history and tradition (both *sqwélqwel* and *sxwōxwiyám*) has existed since time immemorial and form the ‘laws’ and ‘constitution’ of the land, informing all aspects of Stó:lō life, identity, and resource management. The accuracy of this record is protected and maintained through an oral tradition which includes a number of practices and

³² Donald Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 32.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 8.

protocols such as calling witnesses,³⁵ passing on ancestral names (often referred to as being ‘covered with a name’), and the teaching methods by which oral narrative are transmitted.³⁶

As Stó:lō Elder Herb Joe (*T’xwelátse*) stated in our 2011 interview, “How did you remember an event? Well, it was passed on for generations in the smokehouse and that became *sxwōxwiyám* over thousands of years. So it became ingrained in the way you were brought up.”³⁷

The connection between *sxwōxwiyám* and culturally ascribed caretaking responsibilities and authorities throughout the territory was discussed in recent oral history interviews I undertook with Stó:lō community members as a researcher working on a Stó:lō Treaty Related Measures project. SRRMC Cultural Advisor Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts’i*) explained how profound the connections are between *sxwōxwiyám*, (which include origin stories that describe the work of *Xexá:ls*), and caretaking responsibilities:

We have an ancestor that was transformed into this rock, or we have an ancestor transformed into this mountain or this important resource that is only available in our area. Our ancestor was transformed into that, so that’s why it’s so important that everyone take care of their *sxwōxwiyám* because when we look at those resources, it’s not only viewed as a resource, but it’s viewed as part of our extended family, it’s one of our ancestors that was transformed into that.³⁸

³⁵ The calling of witnesses is a practice by which chosen community members publicly accept responsibility to observe and attest to or “witness” a specific event. The documentary video “*T’xwelátse is Finally Home: Celebrating our ancestor’s return home after 114 years of separation.*” (SRRMC Video, Chilliwack, 2007) provides powerful insight into the meaning, value, and purpose of Stó:lō *sxwōxwiyám* and *sqwélqwel* and the protocols and practices for their transmission. It chronicles the journey of Herb Joe, who carries the ancestral name *T’xwelátse* and his corresponding caretaking responsibilities to repatriate “stone” *T’xwelátse*: a transformation object associated with the work of *Xexá:ls*, from the Burke Museum in Washington.

³⁶ Gough and Schaepe, “Caretaking”, 11-12.

³⁷ Herb Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 6, 2011, SRRMC TRM.

³⁸ Sonny McHalsie, interview with Meagan Gough, May 11, 2011, SRRMC TRM.

There is a broad range of *sxwōxwiyám*. There is not one, but rather multiple stories of *sxwōxwiyám* that exist throughout Stó:lō territory, figuratively but also literally grounding it to a Stó:lō identity - past, present, and future - to *S'ólh Téméxw*.³⁹ Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts'i*) further explains the relationship between maintaining this knowledge and Stó:lō Rights and Title:

Sxwōxwiyám is so important because just about every village has their own stories, like it almost seems like wherever there is a village they have a *sxwōxwiyám* that attaches them to that place, either a unique resource area or it could be a mountain or rock and that becomes part of them, that's their *sxwōxwiyám*, that becomes part of their identity, part of their attachment to the land... What really makes it unique though and what is at the core of our relationship to the land and the core of our Aboriginal Rights and Title is the word '*shxwelí*.'⁴⁰

As mentioned above, the second type of Stó:lō oral history, "*sqwélqwel*", is defined as "True Story" (or stories) which is an oral narrative relating to personal history."⁴¹ This knowledge, which refers to "family history or true news" including genealogy, figures more prominently in recording Archie's life history: both in terms of Archie's caretaking and leadership responsibilities but also how he sought to engage me within his family life in our collaboration on this project. Much more than genealogy in Euro-Canadian terms, "*sqwélqwel*" reflects not only family history but delineates relationships to resources, which are viewed as extended family members. Consequently, Stó:lō are raised with teachings that encourage them to recognize that they have a responsibility to care for this knowledge. As access to resources was

³⁹ While beyond the scope of this discussion, many Salish scholars have discussed *sxwōxwiyám*, including Sonny McHalsie, Keith Carlson, and Wilson Duff, among others.

⁴⁰ Sonny McHalsie, interview with Meagan Gough, May 11, 2011, SRRMC TRM. Note: *Shxwelí* translates to "life force" and is discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

⁴¹ Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 8.

primarily determined through kinship, knowing one's family history shaped social, political, cultural, spiritual and economic dimensions of community life.

Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts'i*) explains that *sqwélqwel* not only describe how resources are used, but include messages about the significance of individual caretaking responsibilities:

The whole concept or principle or teaching of *sqwélqwel* is that it is the responsibility of everyone; everyone has to follow that rule or law to look after the places that their ancestors used; to use them and maintain them. Not just to use them, but to maintain them as well.⁴²

In describing the way *sqwélqwel* are also used to position people within Stó:lō society, historian Keith Carlson suggests that:

Sqwélqwel represents a body of historical knowledge and memories that generally consist of information about past happenings to which the speaker has some direct connection... *sqwélqwel* describes events that happened to a particular individual or to someone the conveyor of the information knew or knows. Among the most important *sqwélqwel* are those relating to family history.⁴³

So important was the integrity of these narratives that, as Carlson learned from two fluent *Halq'eméylem* speakers, Elizabeth Herrling and Rosaleen George, in the past there were people who were recognized as the keepers and communicators of all family histories. These people, typically but not exclusively men, were referred to as *sxá:sls*, which they translated as 'he who keeps track of everything.' The *sxá:sls*' task, as they understood it, was to "take care of everything our grandparents taught [showed] us."⁴⁴

⁴² Sonny McHalsie interview in Gough and Schaepe, "Caretaking", 11.

⁴³ Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous Memory and History: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact" (unpublished paper, 2005), 4. For further discussion of *sqwélqwel*, see also Carlson, *The Power of Place*, Chapter Three.

⁴⁴ Interview with Rosaleen George and Elizabeth Herrling in Carlson, "Ibid", 4.

Stó:lō collective identity and family life is expressed in multiple ways that are culturally distinct from those of Euro-Canadian society. Knowing who your relatives are and being able to demonstrate family relationships via *sqwélqwel* was historically, and still remains, of great social, cultural, spiritual, political and now legal (as expressed through Aboriginal Rights and Title to resources) importance.

To emphasize closeness, relatives up to fourth cousins were regarded as brothers and sisters. High-status families were those who knew their genealogical history. The low status *s'téxem* (literally 'worthless people') were considered to have lost or forgotten their history.⁴⁵

In his 1967 essay "Private Knowledge, Morality and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish", prominent scholar Wayne Suttles named "private knowledge", which he argues is guarded knowledge that is usually translated as "advice" in Stó:lō. According to Suttles, "advice" consists of the following:

[g]enealogies and family traditions revealing family greatness, gossip about other families demonstrating how inferior they are, instruction in practical matters such as how to quest for the right type of guardian spirit, secret signals for indicating that someone is of lower class descent, and a good deal of moral training.⁴⁶

He concluded that "[i]n a society that stressed private property as the Coast Salish did, it must have been very effective to present moral training as private property, in the context of secret knowledge on the gaining of wealth and the maintenance of status."⁴⁷ In this way, genealogical information, an aspect of *sqwélqwel*, corresponds to tangible forms of wealth and

⁴⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, "Expressions of Collective Identity" In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*. Edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 24-29, 27.

⁴⁶ Wayne Suttles, "Private Knowledge, Morality and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish" In *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: University of Washington Press, 1987), 3-14, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

property and therefore status and authority. Carlson describes the protocols for the transmission of *sqwélqwel*:

In instances where the historical action does not involve the story's teller, it is expected that a connection with the events and the speaker will be created through a process best thought of as oral footnoting... the audience will expect the speaker or teller to explain how they know what they know.⁴⁸

In this way, knowledge of and accurate transmission of cultural and personal history is linked to class and "used to validate social and political status as well as personal and collective identity."⁴⁹ Further, within the Stó:lō class system:

Validity of such stories are assessed not necessarily against criteria of extant evidence. Nor is the question of 'probability' (as generally referred to in mainstream Canadian society, i.e., not supernatural) generally considered important. Rather, validity is primarily determined according to the status of the teller in relation to the listener and the various individuals (historical conveyors and actors) identified through the oral footnoting process.⁵⁰

As a result, "knowing one's history" has many implications and consequences in all aspects of Stó:lō life. It is directly linked to ongoing and sustained hereditary caretaking responsibilities for multiple resources throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*, such as hereditary fishing spots, like the one Archie Charles oversaw.

Given this, Archie's role within the community as a person knowledgeable of his *sqwélqwel* – of his adoptive, biological and extended family relations and the places associated with his family for which he bears caretaking responsibility (fishcamp, parts of Seabird Island) - secured his status and consequently had a direct impact on this project. First, the relationship we formed served to radiate throughout the community, providing me with access to the people,

⁴⁸ Carlson, "Indigenous Memory", 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 5.

knowledge and experience which has so deeply informed this project. His status within the community provided me access to other high-status people – a network of extended family and friends with whom to consult and conduct supplementary oral history interviews, a network whose support and participation were particularly helpful after his passing to fill in gaps in the research.

Second, as one of Archie’s chosen non-Stó:lō allies and collaborators, engaging me, a non-Stó:lō researcher, functioned to supplement his concern for the successful recording, management and transmission of *sqwélqwel*. It also served to mirror to the community and reinforce his high status as a keeper, and sharer of *sqwélqwel* and further demonstrate to the community his ability to access resources – in our case a trained historian, to record this history. Our research collaboration can be further understood to be in keeping with the Stó:lō protocol of appointing a speaker to speak on behalf of an individual/family at large gatherings such as a potlatch or memorial. Leading community members have often – historically and contemporarily – appointed family outsiders to speak on their behalf. As is noted by Richard Daly in his recent collaboration with Stó:lō Elder Rena Point Bolton: “The role of speaker in *Xwelmelth* society, as in other Indigenous societies, is an old one.”⁵¹

Origins of the Life History Project

As my relationship with Archie developed over the years, I eventually became part of his *sqwélqwel* itself, as witnessed by the role I assumed at key events such as my participation in the awarding of the Order of Canada ceremony as one of his granddaughters, at his request. As such,

⁵¹ Rena Point Bolton and Richard Daly, *Xweliqwiya: The Life of s Stó:lō Matriarch*. (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2013), li.

my relationship with Archie Charles and his family is multidimensional: it has evolved over time to not be bound exclusively by this work. This project has grown from my Master's thesis research in cultural anthropology that involved members of the Stó:lō community, which commenced in 2002, and then led to employment as a researcher for the Stó:lō Nation in 2003. My work as a researcher at the time centered on a community-based project set forth by what was then the Stó:lō Nation Aboriginal Rights and Title Department. The project was designed to explore diverse Stó:lō views of repatriation and determine how the process could best proceed in accordance with local values, identity and history. It was during this time I became acquainted with Archie Charles, his common-law partner Tina Jack and their large extended family. Many of our discussions expanded from the topic of repatriation to something closer to a life history. Throughout our interviews about the topic of repatriation, while explaining the value and meaning of Stó:lō cultural property for all Stó:lō people, Archie often spoke of how it was taken away – by such means as the residential school experience and laws that prohibited Stó:lō ceremonies. He then linked these events to the experiences of his ancestors manifested through his *sqwélqwel*. Archie is well known within his community for his contribution to research projects addressing a number of topics, as well as by many researchers who have interviewed him and his adoptive mother, Mary Charles. His own life narrative, with him as the central subject, had yet to be recorded, analyzed and interpreted. One of the next steps for research that I established in the project was to record life histories of Stó:lō Elders. The experience of interviewing Stó:lō people and learning their diverse perspectives on the topic of repatriation had a profound impact on me, and I became inspired by the future possibility of working on life history research.

In 2004, I visited Archie and his family to give him a copy of my Master's thesis, to honour his contribution. During the course of our visit, I heard a *Halq'eméylem* word being used by him and Tina, followed by some giggling. Then he said "We gave you a name: "*Telhwha*".⁵² In *Halq'eméylem*, it means "Her-again". It was a play on my name, pronounced "Mee-gan", which sounds very similar to "Me-again"; such play was typical of Archie's humour. As Archie explained, "Now you don't have to say 'it's Me-again', when you come here, we can say 'it's her-again!'" My new "pet" name, I believe, was in part an observation that I had returned after our past research project had wrapped up and in part a precursor to our future relationship.⁵³ It was a turning point that led to a deepening of our presence in each other's lives, a presence that evolved over time into this work and grew to envelop both our extended families.

⁵² Archie was a conversant, though not a fluent, *Halq'eméylem* speaker and was unsure how to spell this name. However, years later, in 2011, I learned the spelling of the name during an oral history interview I conducted with Stó:lō Elder Joe Aleck (*Siyamalaxw*), a highly regarded educator and *Halq'eméylem* speaker. He related to me that the name is spelled "*Telhwha*", with the "elh" meaning "me" in *Halq'eméylem*. I would like to thank Mr. Aleck for sharing this knowledge with me. (Joe Aleck, interview with Meagan Gough, July 14, 2011, SRRMC).

⁵³ Humour played a central role in our relationship over the years, highlighted in the creation of my pet name. However, in her work *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), Stó:lō scholar Jo-ann Archibald (*Q'um Q'um Xi'em*), who worked with numerous Stó:lō Elders, (including some of the same people I have interviewed), relays the cultural significance and value of use of humour by Stó:lō Elders. Her observations set out a cultural context for how Archie and Tina, as well as other Stó:lō Elders, employ humour as a vehicle for teaching: "Humour through teasing, joking, and telling funny stories is a very important cultural interaction. Humour indicates that the group is comfortable with and open to each other – and the researcher. If humour is absent from a research session, then one could question the validity of the information shared because the Elders may not have felt comfortable and therefore may not have given sufficient or adequate information." (Archibald, *Storywork*, 68).

Informal Collaboration: Dialogue

In 2006, Archie and I commenced the life history project by beginning to record his stories and review materials together, such as photos. One of the first steps was obtaining his written consent to participate in the project, in the form required by universities. The next step was perhaps more profound. As we were sitting with family by the fire at Archie's hereditary fishcamp, I mentioned to Archie how much I enjoyed hearing his life stories and working with him to record them. Archie paused and asked, "What will it do for you?" The principle of reciprocity so central to Stó:lō culture was apparent in his one simple question, as was his pragmatism. I took a moment to respond, and in essence, I said, "Well, I get to learn from you and about here and that's the part I enjoy the most. For my PhD, I also get to choose from any topic I can imagine and build a project around it, and in that way, your life story helps me to complete my degree." He looked off towards the water. Lowering his voice as he would sometimes for emphasis, "Good," he replied.

This simple discussion between Archie and me (characteristic of his short, soft, direct speech-style) demonstrated he understood and accepted how working together recording his life story meant that I would assume the role of scholar and that the project would give me an opportunity for a tangible benefit, the PhD. As a result of his previous work with scholars, including me, he understood I was working in the partnership with certain expectations around my voice and interpretation. His decision to pursue recording his life history also communicated his status within his family and community as a keeper of historical family knowledge and genealogy (*sqwélqwel*). Given that his high status within the community is in part linked to his successful ability to care for his *sqwélqwel* and associated natural resources (in his case, his genealogy, which

connects him to his hereditary fishing site), ensuring the successful recording and passing on of his personal and family story via our collaboration, both reflected and supported his role.

Formal Collaborative Features: Research Registry

While our project was negotiated informally, I submitted a formal application for research through the SRRMC, and had it approved. The SRRMC research registry acts as a “gatekeeping” process, designed by the Stó:lō Nation for all potential research involving community members to ensure that a series of considerations are met by both the researcher and community. Some such considerations of research include: that it be deemed of use to community members and entail careful consideration of ethical and cultural issues, such as protocols for documenting private or sacred knowledge. Also set forth is that the researcher provide the Stó:lō Nation with copies of all information contributed to a project to ensure that community members, especially Elders, are not involved in redundant research. Many Aboriginal communities and non-governmental organizations are currently using variations of this process, which is part of a broader movement involving self-determination, ownership of culture and practices that seek to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are the keepers and teachers of their knowledge.

This life history project has benefited greatly from my employment with SRRMC from 2010-2014 as both a contract and staff researcher. The matrix of Stó:lō relations, colleagues, mentors, friends and resources which extends beyond Archie Charles and his family, has greatly enriched this work. While my employment with SRRMC as a researcher involved various research initiatives, a primary task was doing community oral history interviews with Stó:lō people about the relationship between resources and caretaking responsibilities. As part of this work, I

interviewed Archie Charles in 2010 and have been granted permission by SRRMC Director Dr. Dave Schaepe and librarian Tia Halstad to reference these protected interviews here. Unbeknownst to me, they would be the last formal interviews I would conduct with Archie prior to his death. They reflected his passion about the sustainable management of the Stó:lō Canyon fishery in accordance with cultural caretaking principles.

Given the overlapping goals and hopes for this project reflected in the participation of Archie and me, as well as his family, the Stó:lō Nation, the Stó:lō Tribal Council, Seabird Island and the University I represent, it is important to note that my interpretation and analysis of Archie's oral narrative and related research will not necessarily reflect their own conclusions. However, I believe that the oral and secondary resources gathered as part of this project will be of use in intended and unintended ways to all those who participated.

Archie passed away November 30, 2010. My attendance at his funeral illuminated the role we had assumed in each other's lives. Archie had asked that I be included in the ceremonies as one of his granddaughters. Before the funeral services commenced, I was also asked by his daughter Rose Charles to assist with writing the eulogy, by drawing upon my role as chronicler and researcher over the past years. I have reflected on those two roles since his passing; on a spiritual level my role with Archie was as granddaughter. In terms of our work together it was as chronicler, researcher and interpreter. I came to conclude that these roles overlap and are intertwined, for they in fact produced the dynamic that fostered this work and the multiple forms it will take. This realization revealed that the true intent and, by turn, contribution of this work is to present both Archie's narrative as well as an articulation of the deeply engaged form of research in which it was recorded, framed, interpreted and written.

As is often the case with learning and obtaining knowledge, its significance reveals itself over time. As a keeper of his *sqwélqwel*, Archie Charles carried cultural knowledge and authority over his hereditary fishing spot on the Fraser River and the salmon that ran through it; a four year life cycle beginning with the hatching of eggs upstream, their swim to the ocean and then their journey back upstream to spawn a new generation that will repeat this cycle. This four year cycle seems to have run parallel to the stages of our time together and the process of preparing this dissertation after his passing: we have now experienced two four year cycles of beginning, learning, death and rebirth. As I participated in Archie's four year memorial, held November 28, 2014 in Chehalis, British Columbia, while simultaneously working on the dissertation, it seems as though – even with his passing – Archie has provided a teaching framework echoing his *sqwélqwel* as caretaker of the Fraser River and salmon that will live on forever.

Stó:lō Relationships with Anthropologists and Historians

Our project was not the first in which Archie was a collaborator, nor was he alone in his ongoing collaborations with scholars; in fact, collaborations between Stó:lō people and academics stretch back more than a century. A significant year in terms of Stó:lō relationships with *Xwélitem* (Euro-Canadians) was 1890. In this year, Charles Hill-Tout,⁵⁴ a British school teacher and “amateur” ethnographer, settled in Abbotsford, B.C., in Stó:lō territory, and began “conducting interviews with Stó:lō Elders.”⁵⁵ This was the beginning of an ongoing relationship

⁵⁴ Hill-Tout's work with members of the Stó:lō community is presented in the text *The Salish People*, which was originally published in 1890 and reprinted in 1978. See Ralph Maud (ed), *The Salish People: The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout, vol. 3* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Talonbooks), 1978.

⁵⁵ Carlson, *Atlas*, 166.

between the Stó:lō community and academics. Hill-Tout worked with numerous Salish communities “following [Franz] Boas’s example in getting texts⁵⁶ in the native languages as well as myths and ethnographic data in English.”⁵⁷ In "1890, Anthropologist Franz Boas visit[ed] Stó:lō territory and interview[ed] George Chehalis. He collect[ed] valuable information concerning tribal groupings, transformer legends and social structures.”⁵⁸ Throughout the early part of the 20th century anthropologists working within what has been referred to as the “salvage paradigm” moved towards First Nations and their cultural property with a sense of urgency. A fundamental assumption of traditional anthropology was that Aboriginal cultures were disappearing. Along with other assumptions which characterized social science research in the modern era, such as belief in the universal nature and benefits of Western scientific knowledge, the assumption that Native people were disappearing provided an ethical justification for the indiscriminate removal of their cultural property (both tangible and intangible forms, including oral histories) through the research process. As a result, a goal of traditional research was to preserve through documentation and collection as much of a culture as possible before it was gone.

⁵⁶ Suttles use of the term “text” here highlights an area that is at times blurred in discussion related to the recording of orature and oral narratives, for in fact Boas didn’t get texts in Native languages, he collected stories and other orature from Salish peoples and subsequently turned them into texts. In the recent work *Listening Up, Writing Down, and Looking Beyond* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), literary scholars Susan Gingell and Wendy Roy use the term “textualized orature” to “signal that orature has undergone a process of de- and re-contextualization that fundamentally changes the oral and verbal.” (12). Intersections between orality and literacy and how this work constitutes a form of “textualized orature” will be further presented in the Chapter One.

⁵⁷ Wayne Suttles and Aldona Jonatis, “History of Research in Ethnology” In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 7, edited by William Sturtevant, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press (1990), 73-87, 79.

⁵⁸ Carlson, *Atlas*, 166.

Many of the prominent texts published during the 1950s explore Stó:lō ceremonial life – particularly winter dancing (also referred to as “spirit dancing”), potlatching and feasting. This emphasis occurred in congruence with the amendment to the *Indian Act* in 1951, which included the lifting of the potlatch ban⁵⁹, at which point Stó:lō ceremonialism became more “visible” to anthropologists. While turn-of-the-century texts had emphasized the “salvage paradigm,” which focused on attaining “authentic” representations of Stó:lō culture, assuming it would, at some point, disappear, many of the texts during this time focused on the impacts and manifestations of culture change and the revival of tradition. Prominent ethnographic texts that examine the worldview and ceremonial practices of the Stó:lō peoples were produced by anthropologists Wilson Duff, Diamond Jenness and Wayne Suttles during the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁰

Anthropological material about Stó:lō culture continued to be produced throughout the second half of the century, with the fluid and dynamic nature of Stó:lō identity and history characterizing the material from the 1990s to the present.⁶¹ This coincides with an increase in Stó:lō heritage and cultural initiatives based upon collaborative relationships with scholars.

Efforts by members of the greater Stó:lō community to protect and maintain cultural knowledge

⁵⁹ Michael Kew, “Central and Southern Coast Salish Ceremonies since 1900” In *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7*, edited by William Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 476-480, 479.

⁶⁰ Some notable examples of Stó:lō ethnography include: Wilson Duff, “The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley of British Columbia,” *Anthropology in British Columbia*, Memoir no.1 (Victoria, B.C., 1952), Diamond Jenness, “The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian.” *Anthropology in British Columbia*, Memoir no. 3 (Victoria, B.C., 1955).

⁶¹ One notable example includes: *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7*, edited by William Sturtevant, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press 1990), a comprehensive compendium chronicling research about Northwest Coast Aboriginal peoples (including the Stó:lō), particularly the article by Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900”, 476-480.

through a variety of means, including the development of heritage publications based on collaborative efforts with scholars, the implementation of controls over research and the hosting of University ethnographic, archeological and ethnohistory field schools⁶² can be understood in relation to a broader cultural revival movement. This revival movement is also characterized by an emphasis on regenerating aspects of Stó:lō cultural life that were nearly lost through experiences with assimilationist policies, such as the anti-potlatch laws and residential schools, and its success is reflected in the increasing number of people participating in cultural activities and initiatives such as winter dancing, canoe racing, art and language programs. This revival of Stó:lō culture is articulated more precisely by Stó:lō community member Herb Joe (*T'xwelátse*), whom I interviewed in 2003:

We have revitalized the other parts of our culture over the past 35 years or so, with of course the spirit dancing and art. Language again is being solidified with a new generation of *Halq'eméylem* speakers and teachers. Our history is now being taught in our schools. These are all parts of a culture that I see, as being put back into place.⁶³

Thus, the success and continued emphasis of Stó:lō community intellectuals and knowledge keepers, including Archie Charles, on maintaining culture in balance with a clear vision for the future, strongly motivates the contemporary impetus to develop collaborative research relationships as part of a broader process of self-determination that the Stó:lō are engaged in.

⁶² One such initiative is the UBC Ethnographic Field School that commenced in 1993 hosted by Stó:lō Tribal Council, which brings graduate students to the Stó:lō community every summer to develop collaborative research topics with members of the community. Many publications have resulted from this initiative. Additionally, the USASK/UVIC ethnohistory field school, started in 1997 as well as scholarly collaborations between Stó:lō Nation and Berkeley University archaeology department, have similarly added to our knowledge of the Stó:lō community.

⁶³ Herb Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, June 13, 2003.

Decolonization of Stó:lō Research: Collaborative Research Methods and the History of Stó:lō Community-Based Research

The depth and breadth of Stó:lō research establishes an extensive knowledge base of accounts *about* Stó:lō people and more recently *by* them. Given this, how has the Stó:lō community-based research process evolved and how does our collaboration relate to this evolution? Archie is one of a great line of Stó:lō people who have chosen to share information with outsiders starting with the informants/collaborators who worked with scholars Hill-Tout, Boas, Jenness, Duff, Smith, Lerman, Suttles, Wells and Carlson (among others).⁶⁴ The 1970s heralded a number of substantial shifts in the nature of research with Stó:lō which have shaped and inspired this work. In 1976, folklorist Norman Lerman's *Legends of the River People* marked a significant change in terms of the nature of collaboration between Stó:lō knowledge keepers and academics. Lerman's book was the outcome of his recording of one hundred oral narratives by Stó:lō Elders over a summer of storytelling in British Columbia in 1950. Lerman, crucially, was the first scholar to focus his interest on Stó:lō community members' and storytellers' views of the stories themselves, rather than merely examining how the spoken stories fit into an academically determined research agenda. He set out to record and consequently frame the oral narratives that were the most important to the Stó:lō people he talked with. Editor and literary scholar Betty Keller sets out the unique narrative structure which invites readers into the "setting of a feast"⁶⁵; to hear the stories of the Elders. This is but one way that *Legends of the River People* attunes readers to the cultural context and setting in which the

⁶⁴ The depth and breadth of Stó:lō research cannot be overstated. The collaborative process central to the research of Salish scholar Jo-Ann Archibald and anthropologist Bruce Miller will be discussed more fully in Chapter One.

⁶⁵ Norman Lerman and Betty Keller (ed) *Legends of the River People*. (Vancouver: November House Press, 1976), 6.

stories are told. In the concluding section “about the stories”, Lerman provides biographical and supplementary information about each storyteller, linking the narratives to the speakers.

Another transformation in the nature of research collaboration can be seen with the “Skowkale History Project”, which was undertaken by Stó:lō leaders and facilitated by Stó:lō community members including Steven Point, Roy Point and Bob Hall. In 1972, Mary Charles was one of a number of Stó:lō Elders interviewed as part of the project. Drawing upon Roy Point’s working knowledge of *Halq’eméylem*, the project offered an opportunity for *Halq’eméylem* speaking Elders such as Mary Charles to be recorded conversing in their language. In Mary Charles’ interview, she and Roy Point relate to one another on many levels – exchanging *sqwélqwel* and discussing their distinct residential school experiences - providing listeners with an insider’s perspective of a dialogue between members of the same community. This project marked a turning point in research, for it was defined by Stó:lō people, for the benefit of the community, with self-determination, self-governance and cultural preservation at its core. It also subsequently formed the nucleus of the Coqueleetza Research Institute.⁶⁶

By the 1990s, the Stó:lō Tribal Council was taking collaboration to a new level through the process of hiring academics to work in their office on topics and subjects identified by community members. Collaboration with these principles in mind resulted in the 2003 *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual*, which was designed to guide heritage policy and research processes within the community. Further, under the auspices of this approach, two valuable publications about Stó:lō cultural heritage were issued. The first, *You Are Asked To Witness: The Stó:lō in*

⁶⁶ The Coqueleetza Research Institute was formed from the efforts of a committed group of Stó:lō community members, primarily Elders, to preserve their language and culture.

Canada's Pacific Coast History, a 1999 publication edited by historian Keith T. Carlson (who was employed as Stó:lō Nation's historian at the time), articulates the needs of community members to share their culture: "For many years it has been an objective of Stó:lō leaders to better inform *Xwelítem* society (mainstream Canadians) about the history and culture of the Stó:lō people, as well as the history of Stó:lō-*Xwelítem* relations."⁶⁷ The text also reflects the hopes of Stó:lō leaders to reduce prejudice towards Stó:lō Peoples, articulated in the introduction: "Stó:lō leaders recognize that by promoting cross-cultural awareness, prejudice and racism can be broken down and suspicion and resentment replaced with respect and understanding."⁶⁸ The second, *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, to which I refer frequently throughout this work, was another important Stó:lō text published in 2001. It extended the aims and goals of its predecessor, *You Are Asked to Witness*. The *Atlas* was hailed as a "landmark publication without precedent or comparison in Canada or the United States" which it accomplishes through providing an "in-depth and wide-ranging view of a single cultural region."⁶⁹ The significant and collaborative research efforts between scholars and the community are highlighted in the text:

Much of the new analysis presented in this book is attributable to the unique and synergistic relationship of traditionally trained Stó:lō intellectuals working with non-Native colleagues educated in western universities.⁷⁰

Anthropologist Crisca Bierwert's 1999 experimental Salish ethnography *Brushed by Cedar*, provides an example of another shift at this time to the production of more reflexive texts

⁶⁷ Carlson, *Witness*, i.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Carlson, "*Atlas*", insert.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

between Stó:lō knowledge-keepers and non-Stó:lō academics. In Beirwert's book, she states that the goal of her work is to "create a non-authoritative text that nonetheless speaks knowingly"⁷¹ which she does by illustrating not only what she learned, but how she learned.

The 2007 publication of *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, a collection of essays that serves as a follow up to Wayne Suttles' now seminal *Coast Salish Essays*, demonstrated not only the depth of sustained collaborative relationships between non-Stó:lō scholars and the Stó:lō community, but also illuminated a change in terms of the nature of collaboration and Aboriginal authorship. The article by Stó:lō SRRMC cultural advisor and traditional knowledge keeper Albert "Sonny" McHalsie illustrated the changing nature of collaborative dynamics from those based historically on that of Stó:lō as informant to that of a Stó:lō knowledge keeper speaking directly to and within academia. McHalsie's contribution links to a broader movement of Aboriginal peoples speaking in their own voice within the academic world and being accepted not merely as informants, but as equally established cultural authorities and academic counterparts who utilize research to respond to community agendas, not exclusively to the goals of academia.

These shifts and changes over time within Stó:lō research have impacted my understanding of collaboration with Archie in a number of ways, revealing the value of reflexivity in representations of the learning process, the power that insider dialogue has in revealing cultural dynamics and the impact that research can have when used as a tool to meet the goals established by the community and participant. While he never stated it explicitly to me,

⁷¹ Crisca Beirwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living By the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 3.

Archie's multiple collaborative efforts with scholars most likely had its genesis (at least in part) in his adoptive mother Mary Charles' work of this kind. Notably, she worked with local amateur ethnographer Oliver Wells and Columbia University based anthropologist Marian Smith (a student of Franz Boas, who led an anthropological field school in Seabird Island during the 1940s). Mary Charles' interview recordings proved to be of great use in this project. While Archie did not make reference to his work with other researchers to me, I was aware of his many contributions. Archie's characteristic short, direct speech-style which was at the heart of our collaboration is also evident in transcripts of his other research contributions (See: Carlson 1997, Joe and Victor 1998, Labinski 1993).

While Archie's humility is a quality that typifies Stó:lō traditional leaders, his distinct style demonstrating his beliefs through action rather than speech is somewhat atypical in comparison with other Stó:lō Chiefs and colleagues of Archie I interviewed. The combination of his personality, biography and culturally ascribed expectations of a leader's communication shaped our dialogue in both content and form. To learn from Archie as I sought to do, required that extensive time be spent with him, as his vehicle for teaching and passing on knowledge was to show me who he was. This way of learning worked beautifully for both of us and resulted in a family-based style of research founded on our experience. The evolution of community-based and collaborative research in the Stó:lō community mirrors developments more broadly that have emerged in response to the concerns of Aboriginal scholars and non-Aboriginal anthropologists and historians about the need to "detangle" their disciplines from colonial practices. To support

this process, I drew upon my experience utilizing a Participatory Action Research⁷², or “PAR” methodology, used during my Master’s research with the Stó:lō community. PAR was utilized in this project to inform the basic goals of the project. It is a form of community-based research (or “CBR”) that has become a favoured response to challenges made by academics and First Nations peoples alike since the 1980s and emphasizes the following: first, that the goals of research be developed collaboratively between the community member(s)⁷³ and the researcher. Second, that there are clear benefits to the research that are both locally and culturally based. Third, that cultural knowledge be considered a valuable tool by which contemporary issues may be resolved. Fourth, that cultural forms of communication be considered in the dissemination of research; and lastly, that the use of cultural knowledge be linked to emancipation, justice and social change in a local setting. As argued by Māori Indigenous feminist scholar Linda Smith in

⁷² The history of action- and participatory-based research has its roots, in part, in the work of the philosopher John Dewey, who “applied the inductive scientific method of problem solving as a logic for the solution of problems in such fields as aesthetics, philosophy, psychology and education.” (J. McKernan, *Curriculum Action Research: A Handbook of Methods and Resources for the Reflective Practitioner* (London: Kogan Page, 1991), 8. Dewey, in turn, was influenced by epistemological considerations related to the nature of human experience presented by German philosopher and phenomenologist Wilhelm Dilthey. The influence of Dilthey on anthropological discourse is articulated in *The Anthropology of Experience* edited by anthropologists Victor Turner and Edward Bruner (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986). In this work it is stated that “For Turner, the immediate inspiration for an ‘anthropology of experience’ derived from the German thinker Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and his concept of *Erlebnis*, or what has been ‘lived through’” (3). For an in-depth discussion of the concept of *Erlebnis*, see: Frank Schreiner, *Dilthey’s Concept of Erlebnis: The Epistemological Legitimation of The Human Sciences*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1982.

⁷³ As leading PAR scholars Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason remark of the methodology: “Action research is best seen as an emergent, evolutionary and educational process of engaging with self, persons and communities which needs to be sustained for a significant period of time.” Bradbury and Reason, “Introduction: Inquiry and Participation in Search of a World Worthy of Human Aspiration,” *The Handbook of Action Research*, (London, Sage Publication, 2001, reprinted in 2006), 12.

Decolonizing Methodologies, PAR can be seen to provide one means to “decolonize” research involving Aboriginal peoples by ensuring research that is “respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful.”⁷⁴ Participatory action-based community research⁷⁵ establishes the importance of scrutinizing the power dynamics involved in a given project for stakeholders (including the First Nation community, the participating university and governmental or non-governmental organization) all of whom may have divergent ideas of the benefits and goals of a project. Given this, I recognize the continuing ethical dimensions of engaged research that interpretive

⁷⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 9.

⁷⁵ While PAR is a methodological tool that encourages the conduct of ethical, moral and locally beneficial research, it is essential to critically examine its efficacy. Its theoretical principles do not alleviate methodological implications that arise in practice, particularly involving First Nations Peoples. For example, *Stl'atl'imx* poet-scholar Peter Cole satirizes the approach in order to illuminate First Nations' concerns with the use of the method as participatory “auction research” in which researchers make a “reserve bid” (*Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing: Coming Home to the Village* (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006, 60). Another critique of PAR further explores essential considerations for researchers using this approach: “Communities in a process of empowerment, notably First Nations, are questioning the need for outside facilitators of research, saying PAR does not go far enough in bringing their communities into the research and development arena. This challenges the romantic idea of ‘partnering with communities’ to do research and advocacy. It asserts the power of the community to find its own research consultants and hold them accountable. Counter-management is a different idea than partnering. When group autonomy is respected, counter-management is transformed into management under self-determination.” (Rebecca Hagey, “The Use and Abuse of Participatory Action Research,” University of Toronto, Faculty of Nursing, a guest editorial in *Chronic Diseases in Canada*, Vol. 18, No.1, (1997), 1-4: 3). In order to circumvent such criticism, the author argues “[p]articipatory action research, accepting the politics of research, requires a good emotional intelligence quotient, a high tolerance of conflict and excellent group process skills.” (Hagey, 4). Regarding how the successful use of PAR is defined in a given project, an empirical test of its success is less relevant than a test of its usefulness in the empowerment of participants and the communication of this process to multiple audiences. As a result, I stress in this dissertation Johannes Fabian's general remarks of participatory methods, “...The proof of its working is that it enables us to act in the world together.” (Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Work of Anthropology: Critical Essays 1971-1991* [London; New York: Routledge, 1991], 207.)

anthropologist Clifford Geertz pointed to more than a quarter of a century ago when he noted that:

The gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren't, always immense, but not much noticed, has suddenly become extremely visible. What once seemed only technically difficult, getting 'their' lives into 'our' words has turned morally, politically even epistemologically delicate.⁷⁶

Cultural historian Florencia Mallon problematizes the notion of critical appraisal in her research in ways I find useful, particularly given my overlapping roles as researcher, employee and one of Archie's family members. Mallon's concept of "partial history" reflects the symbiotic processes of selecting, remembering and representing the self, and is illustrative of choices made together by the researcher and collaborator. In this project, I embrace the implications of what Mallon also presents as the issue of how her ongoing presence in the Mapuche communities of Nicolás Ailío in Chile potentially "intervenes"⁷⁷ in the construction of a historical narrative of the community, but asserts that "this does not mean that I must abandon my attempt to get close to the history and carry on a dialogue about it."⁷⁸ Indeed, I keep in mind the additional goals set forth in the work *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Practice in Contemporary Anthropology* (1997), in which the concept of representation is reconceived as "interpretation, communication, visualization and advocacy."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 130.

⁷⁷ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, xiv.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 20.

⁷⁹ Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dawson (eds), "Introduction: The Road From Santa Fe." *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Practice in Contemporary Anthropology* (London and New York: Routledge. 1997), 1-17: 3.

Stó:lō oral histories and the cultural protocols referred to by certain Elders as “laws” that govern their transmission have survived in the minds and hearts of this particular generation, despite ongoing and systematic abuses endured by many over the past century as a result of colonial forces. These abuses, which over the past century and a half have taken on a variety of forms such as residential schools (1862-1996), the banning of meaningful spiritual ceremonies such as the potlatch and winter dance (1884-1951) and the forced expropriation of land from Stó:lō peoples, are real and thus form part of the tapestry of Stó:lō, Canadian and International Indigenous history.⁸⁰ Thus, it is not simply that there is an opportunity to hear a Stó:lō Elder’s life history, but that there is an opportunity to engage in listening to how a particular individual chooses to narrate their own life story and to explore the dynamics involved in how they present their history to a cultural outsider. In my experience with Archie, his engagement of me to record

⁸⁰ “Tapestry of history” is a metaphor I use to explain my own interpretation of how the many stories and versions of history chronicled and interpreted here constitute individual threads that, when woven together, create this specific account or “image” of history. Tapestry, something that is “rich, varied and intricately woven”, conveys a highly contextualized version of my interpretation of this history. By virtue of its interpretation and translation, I accept it is fundamentally contextualized, assuming the status of what Gingell and Roy term “textualized orature” (Gingell and Roy, “Listening” 12-13). As a non-Stó:lō scholar, while I draw upon metaphors that have points of reference in my own lived experience, I acknowledge value in the use and inclusion of Indigenous metaphor as a means of telling Indigenous history. I appreciate the work of Indigenous scholars who tell their history by drawing upon their own personal culturally-based metaphor. In honour of their efforts, and in recognition of the diversity of experiences within the Stó:lō community, I remain mindful not to emphasize specific examples of Stó:lō metaphor as more authentic versions of Stó:lō thought, history or knowledge than others. At least two female Stó:lō scholars have stressed the importance of the use of Indigenous metaphor and engaged in its use in thought-provoking ways. Author, activist and poet Lee Maracle’s work *I Am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism*. (Vancouver, British Columbia: Press Gang Publishers, 1996) is a ground-breaking personal narrative that powerfully evokes Stó:lō metaphor as a means of educating. Similarly, while I utilize the metaphor “tapestry of history”, Stó:lō scholar Jo-ann Archibald (*Q’um Q’um Xiem*) points towards one local Stó:lō figuration of history based on the metaphor “treasure in the basket” in her work *Indigenous Storywork* (2008).

his life narrative was inclusive and celebratory of community and change, innovation and tradition, his exceptional and everyday lived experiences. This dovetails with what oral historians have established as a trend in communities where oppressive, subversive or colonial forces have been present that focuses on the growing importance of the “relationship between memory and the future.”⁸¹ As highly regarded oral historian Louisa Passerini remarks in *Memory and Totalitarianism*, “people’s memories of their past lives, what they remember and what they forget, are shaped by their own expectations for the future...hopes, fears and projections converge into shaping memory and its strategies.”⁸² These insights into the impact of colonialism on personal and collective memory shape the hope that this life history contributes to the revitalization of Stó:lō cultural identity and practices for future generations.

Shift from Traditional Biography to Life History and *Testimonio*: Historicizing the Told-To Genre

In their classic work *Lives: An Anthropological Approach to Biography*, life historians such as Langness and Frank, identify rapport as the key component of successful life history

⁸¹Luisa Passerini (Ed), *Memory and Totalitarianism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 12.

⁸² Passerini, *Totalitarianism*, 12. For a further exploration of the nature of historical experience, see historian Hayden White, “The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation,” edited by W. J. Mitchell, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1983, 119-143). “The Politics of Interpretation” article extends White’s early thesis posited in *Metahistory* (1973), that history and historical writing are inherently subjective in nature. Fundamentally based on interpretation, not objectivity or the laws of science, historical writing, he argues, is “a subjective and political act”. The danger, White says, is that not only is the writing of history plagued by a politics of interpretation, but a “politics of exclusion”, which favours both specific narratives as being of interest (dominant, not subaltern), and particular forms of communication (traditionally that of the monograph, not oral tradition). See Sally Moore, "Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography," *American Ethnologist* 14 (4) (1987), 727-736.

research. The bond Archie Charles and I built over many years situates our work within this framework. Since the 1970s, there has been a notable shift from a more traditional form of biographical writing to contemporary life history. Referred to as *testimonio* writing⁸³ in Latin America, contemporary life history scholarship is explicit about how and why such narratives are constructed, as well as who the subject is. Many of the changes in biographical and contemporary life history writing illuminate the broader concerns of both historians and anthropologists. In co-producing Archie's life narrative, I have considered a number of challenges made in recent years regarding the research and writing of life histories, including: the epistemological assumption that the goals and benefits of research are universal in nature; the preservation of cultural knowledge based on the assumption that Native people are disappearing; the belief that objectivity is an ideal of anthropological research; and the belief that the representation and dissemination of cultural knowledge obtained through research ought to take

⁸³*Testimonio* writing in Latin America gained prominence in the 1970s as a tool for social and political activism and a means to articulate a "history from below." As a kind of postcolonial literature, through a first person narrative, *testimonio* adds depth to the dominant historical record in places and communities where particular perspectives or voices have been omitted due to class, gender, cultural, religious or political inequity. For key examples, see June Nash's *I Spent my Life in The Mines: The Story of Juan Rojas, Bolivian Tin Miner* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) and Rosa Isalde Reuque Paillalef, *When a Flower is Reborn: The Life and Times of a Mapuche Feminist* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), which make a valuable contribution to Latin American *testimonio* literature. Developing engaged methodological approaches, as seen in the political impact of *I, Rigoberta Menchu An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (London: Verso Publishing, 1985), a politically charged and controversial *testimonio* of the internationally recognized female Mayan activist which still sparks debate. The "Rigoberta Menchu Controversy," as it has been referred to, raised fundamental questions about truth, validity, cultural ownership, ethnographic authority and the boundaries of anthropological writing. Anthropologist David Stoll's work, *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of all Poor Guatemalans* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), contained essays in which Latin Americanists, anthropologists and historians weighed in on the debate.

the form of an authoritative text. As a result of increased dialogue and collaboration between Indigenous peoples and scholars who produce works like this study, the life history genre across disciplines currently emphasizes two central features.

The first is an acknowledgment of the subjective and the inter-subjective nature of both history and historical writing. Latin American oral historian Florencia Mallon coined the term “partial history” to reflect the processes of how each person remembers, selects and represents themselves to a researcher. The presence of the listener and the dynamics it produces cannot be extricated from the eventual narrative.

Secondly, regarding the subject of the work, many contemporary life histories, including this one, provide an opportunity for subaltern, colonized, or oppressed peoples to tell their version of history. By embracing a trend in feminist and gender history, as the editors of *Gender and Memory* observe, life history work facilitates the sharing of private or “unofficial” versions of history often excluded from public historical record. By providing a space for the articulation of “things forgotten and silenced”, we can “introduce the missing voices of the underprivileged to create a ‘history from below.’”⁸⁴

Building on the assertion of these scholars, this work illuminates how Archie Charles (and more broadly, Stó:lō people) have sought not simply to reproduce the knowledge of their ancestors, but to apply that knowledge in changing contemporary circumstances, revealing the complex way they interpret the past so as to make sense of the present.

⁸⁴ Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini, Paul Richard Thompson (Eds), *Gender and Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers: 2005), 4.

To deny the history of colonialism embedded within the anthropological and historical enterprise is unacceptable, so this dissertation takes seriously the decolonizing goal of making the cultural knowledge obtained in scholarly research involving First Nations accessible to those whose lives it most intimately reflects and affects.⁸⁵ This can in large part be achieved in an Indigenous person's life history by being inclusive of culturally relevant forms of communication, oral tradition and language of origin. As historian Allesandro Portelli remarks, "Oral sources are *oral* sources" stressing that their orality cannot be discarded.⁸⁶ Furthermore, new opportunities that digitized media have created mean that certain forms of recorded oral

⁸⁵ In 1974, Anthropologist Del Hymes edited the collection of essays *Reinventing Anthropology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), which called upon anthropology to turn criticism upon itself through comparative study of its own traditions and its role in shaping anthropological knowledge of the "other." With the emergence of the new social history in the 1960s and its interlocking hierarchies of "race, class and gender", many historians working during the 1970s sought to include the histories of oppressed peoples in their works, while anthropologists sought to challenge issue of power underlying their research theory and practice. In addition to these radical changes within research, many influential texts were written as Indigenous social and political activism peaked in the United States and Canada. The presence of the American Indian Movement (AIM) voices in dialogue related to Indigenous rights, as well as increased participation of First Nations peoples in an academic setting dramatically influenced the types of historical and anthropological works being written about First Nations' cultural history. Works at this time, such as the 1970 cultural manifesto authored by Indigenous scholar and activist Vine Deloria, *We Talk, You Listen* (New York: McMillan, 1970), can be understood to illustrate the tangible tension related to the construction of authority, voice and representation that characterized Native and non-Native relations in research as well as everyday life. In the field of literature, Laguna Pueblo author Leslie Marmon Silko's, *Ceremony* (New York: Penguin Press, 1977) and Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *House Made of Dawn* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1969) introduced new voices and historical perspectives on the impacts of colonialism. Maori feminist Scholar Linda Smith's work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999) further crystallized the necessity for Indigenous perspectives on colonial history and, by proxy, traditional research methodologies used to record Indigenous histories.

⁸⁶ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press. 1991), 46.

histories can be made accessible in a digitized version of their oral form online, or in a CD accompanying the written text – something accomplished with great success by Jennifer Brown in her oral history research with Cree Elder Louis Bird.⁸⁷

In contrast to the traditional "biography" genre of research, in which authors typically wrote "about" the subject, this project emphasizes collaboration in all stages of research, including the co-production of the eventual representation of work and interpretation of its meaning. As postcolonial and *testimonio* scholar Mary Louise Pratt establishes, the key element of *testimonio* writing is that the narrative be based on articulating or "testifying" to first-hand experiences, and that "the subject decides what to tell and how to tell it."⁸⁸ I am inspired by the "interpretive perspective" advocated by contemporary ethnographers and oral historians, and I intend to avoid the extreme manifestation of postmodern writing, or what anthropologist Caroline Brettel refers to in her work *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography* as "confessional tales" – "ethnographies that tend to focus more on the fieldworker than the culture studied."⁸⁹ Anthropologist Julie Cruickshank's told-to narrative with three Yupik Elders *Life Lived Like a Story* (1990) alerted audiences to the processual and inter-subjective elements of recording oral narratives. Cruickshank's work illustrates how storytelling does not

⁸⁷ Canadian anthropologist Brown's collaboration with Elder Louis Bird to record his life history *Telling Our Stories: Omushkego Legends and Histories from Hudson Bay* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) resulted in an accompanying website and thus provides an example of this new trend. To read and listen to Louis Bird's oral history, see: <http://www.ourvoices.ca/index/louisbirdbio> (download date: August 19, 2009).

⁸⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, "I, Rigoberta Menchu and the Culture Wars," *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* edited by Arturo Arias (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 29-57: 41.

⁸⁹ Caroline B. Brettel et al., (ed), *When They Read What We Write - The Politics of Ethnography* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 1993), 1. See Ruth Behar: *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

occur in isolation from social, political, personal, spiritual and cultural experience and the version of the story told reflects the dynamics of how listener and teller are engaged with one another. Cruikshank observed the shifting nature of her collaboration with the three Elders, reflecting: “Under their tutelage my interests have shifted away from an oral history committed to documenting changes in social reality and toward an investigation of narrative forms for talking about, remembering and interpreting everyday life.”⁹⁰ In my work with Archie (and after his passing, with his family), I take to heart the spirit of *testimonio* literature - that the subject decides “what to tell and how to tell it”. I also recognize the inherently active role I play first in the shared dialogue between Archie and I and then following as editor, translator, researcher and writer in the production of this work. I echo and seek to build upon McCall’s assertion that “told-to” collaborations can be viewed as “productive sites for analysing the shifting dynamics of cross-cultural interaction.”⁹¹

Historiography of Aboriginal Told-To Narratives on Northwest Coast

This version of Archie’s life history contributes to a rich and established field of Aboriginal life story writing on the Northwest Coast of Canada and the United States. Archie’s generation consisted of many residential school survivors who experienced immense culture loss and change, yet sought to improve the quality of life for themselves and their people by becoming leaders, especially within the political arena. In this time of cultural upheaval, many returning war veterans became the first elected chiefs within their communities under the newly

⁹⁰ Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like A Story* (University of Nebraska Press, 1990), x.

⁹¹ McCall, *First Person*, 5.

imposed Department of Indian Affairs reserve system. As a result, some of Archie's peers have also engaged in told-to narratives to share their life teachings and leave a legacy of their experiences.

The life of George Manuel, Shuswap leader and former Chief of the Assembly of First Nations shared similarities with Archie's; he too attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School, worked in logging in his youth and was deeply involved in local politics. In 1974, Manuel collaborated with writer Michael Posluns to write of his vision of a "Fourth World"- a Nation State in which Aboriginal people and Europeans co-existed together not only peacefully, but successfully. Manuel maintained that Aboriginal peoples and newcomers have not co-existed successfully in the past. He called for the "conquerors" to re-evaluate their European biases, structures, goals and moral imperatives. Manuel's work serves as an early example of a told-to narrative which can also be seen as his political manifesto. His work with the United Nations provided a forum to lobby and bring about global recognition of the plight of Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world. This work signalled a shift in how Aboriginal life history and told-to narratives were co-produced: it served as an early example of cross-cultural collaboration whereby the Aboriginal person, their thoughts, feelings, moral imperatives and political agendas were central, with the book acting as a platform used to speak to a wider (non-Aboriginal) audience. It also alerted readers to the dialogical presence and potential in cross-cultural collaboration. As Poslun wrote of their process, "far from being strange that a single voice

should be the work of two authors, we should like to think that the dialogue from which the voice arose is in itself a signal of the Fourth World.”⁹²

Another of Archie’s political contemporaries, Squamish Chief *Knot-La-cha* (Simon Baker) similarly engaged in a told-to narrative. Aboriginal educator Verna Kirkness worked with him to compile and edit his stories, producing the thoughtful work *Knot-La-Cha: The Autobiography of Chief Simon Baker* (1994). Kirkness and Baker, who were both strong proponents of Aboriginal education, were familiar with one another prior to embarking on the project which brought a synergy to their collaboration.

Anthropologist Wendy Wickwire’s work with Okanagan Elder Harry Robinson, which first appeared in *Write It On Your Heart* (1989), has in many ways become a benchmark of Aboriginal told-to narratives; first for its contribution to enriching the historical record by means of the oral narratives told by Robinson, but also in terms of the sensitivity Wickwire displayed to the dynamics of collaborative cross-cultural authorship. Robinson was a keeper of cultural knowledge within his community and a talented orator who was able to translate this knowledge to a larger audience. In his words "I tell stories for 21 hours or more when I get started. Kind of hard to believe, but I do, because this (is) my job. I'm a storyteller."⁹³

More recently, *Standing Up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (2012) has shown the value of life stories about people who have been marginalized even within their own communities. The work of anthropologist Leslie A.

⁹² George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. (Don Mills Ontario, Collier-McMillan, 1974): xiii.

⁹³ Harry Robinson: http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=4730 (download date August 10, 2014)

Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan resulted in a powerful collaborative told-to narrative which presents the contested life narrative of controversial Kwakwaka'wakw leader and activist, Jane Constance Cook (1870-1951). To accomplish this, Robertson draws on a variety of sources, but it is her means of engaging multiple members of the family to explore the contested, challenged and unmediated views of a polarizing figure within the community that sets this work apart. The goal of the work, Robertson states is “to document ways in which one family has worked to resolve questions about the past.”⁹⁴

Two examples of Stó:lō life narratives illuminate changes in the genre. In 1972, Stó:lō logger Hank Pennier's autobiography *Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half-Breed Logger* was printed. Pennier's warm and inviting prose, inviting readers to “just call me Hank” represents one of the earliest accounts of autobiography in the Stó:lō world. In 2007, historian Keith Carlson and English scholar Kristina Fagan worked with Pennier's descendants to reissue the volume as *Call Me Hank: A Stó:lō Man's Reflections on Logging, Living, and Growing Old*. As part of their work, they added a scholarly interpretation to Hank Pennier's original manuscript. Carlson and Fagan's analysis of Pennier's narrative includes a valuable discussion about Pennier's narrative style and the ways in which he acted as editor, translator and author of his own life memories and history. The recent publication of *Xwelíqwiya: The Life of a Stó:lō Matriarch* (2013), based on Stó:lō Elder Rena Point Bolton and sociologist Richard Daly's long standing collaboration, is an example of Stó:lō knowledge keepers' invitation to non-Stó:lō researchers to work together to collaborate within a familial and

⁹⁴ Leslie A. Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, *Standing Up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 8.

cultural setting and to share their legacy for personal, social, political and spiritual goals. This work further refines the presupposition that collaborative research (and consequently academic authorship by non-Stó:lō collaborators) be determined and grounded within not only a community but a family framework. As Steven Point, son of Rena Point Bolton, states of Daly's approach to collaboration in the Preface of *Xwelíqwiya*:

...he spends time with the subjects of his study, attending gatherings and feasts and even residing inside their communities so that he can gain a deeper, inside perspective that later informs his written work.⁹⁵

Point then describes presenting Richard with a talking stick “so that there is no doubt that he speaks on behalf of my Mother in this book.”⁹⁶ When situating Archie's narrative within the broader genre of told-to narratives, it becomes apparent that Archie's life story diverges, at least in some respects, from many of the central works in this field.

Unlike many of the other people who have been writing or sharing their life stories, Archie was not an Aboriginal orator and storyteller in the way that people might presume. However, this does not detract from the impact of his life and legacy. He engaged me as a researcher in a manner which reflected his ethos and as such, this narrative reflects the diverse and distinct ways in which Aboriginal people choose to live. In addition, it provides the opportunity to explore subtle and less prevalent ways in which a narrator may serve to edit, translate and mediate their own story within the told-to genre. As Richard Daly aptly states, “In any told-to project, perhaps the principal goal of both the teller and the listener is to record the

⁹⁵ Bolton and Daly, *Xwelíqwiya*, liv.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

past for the use and appreciation in the future, in hopes of providing assistance in cultural continuity.”⁹⁷

The matrix within which collaboration unfolds is unique to each research dynamic and I have chosen to place this matrix in the foreground of this work. Many people who have read the life histories of other Elders, particularly in the rich historiography of life histories of Northwest Coast Elders like Harry Robinson, may have an expectation of a narrative style in which storytelling is at the core. Archie’s life story as transmitted to me during our time together illustrates another way, shaped by a number of factors, including his naturally quiet nature and mode of communication centered upon showing not telling who he was (something he noted was developed further in the teaching he received while in the Army) and the guiding principles of Stó:lō communication and humility. Archie made statements but rarely qualified them or fully explicated his opinions. As part of his ethos, he chose to instruct others in his principles and practices not in words but through actions, something I not only experienced directly but was a pattern echoed by colleagues, friends and family members in our interviews. Additional discussion about his style of speech, quiet nature and his desire to teach through action rather than words and the impact this had on the shape of our collaboration will be explored further in Chapter One. In earlier drafts of this work, I sought to make cohesive Archie’s story as it was told to me, questioning how it should fit within the conventions of told-to and life history works. However, Archie’s gaps, silences and omissions, his style of narration, as well as my process to engage him in his memories serve to illustrate the complex ways he made meaning out his life

⁹⁷ Ibid, xxxv.

experiences and illustrates how his leadership and teaching style shaped the specific form of family-based collaboration in which we engaged.

On different occasions, I have heard the current Chief of Seabird Island, Clem Seymour, describe the leadership and teaching style of Stó:lō Elders, including Archie (who he viewed as a mentor in both politics and personal life), using the euphemism “walk with me”. The Elders, he said, would engage individuals in the community and ask them to “walk with (them)”. As I learned throughout our time spent together, despite being the narrator, and contrary to expectations that may have been established in other told-to narratives, Archie demonstrated through his actions that he would share with me what he knew of the world and his personal experiences in a style best thought of as “walk with me” rather than “talk with me”. As a result, Archie’s life narrative as presented in this work is similar yet distinct from others: it was his chosen style of narration that directly shaped our collaboration, making this told-to narrative more an examination of a life lived within the Stó:lō-Canadian experience than a life history *per se*.

Walk With Me: Intended Contributions of Research

This dissertation is designed to make four scholarly contributions. First, it seeks to add to new and emergent forms of life history writing within the told-to genre. In contrast to the traditional “biography” genre of research, this project, along with other contemporary life histories, emphasizes the collaborative process in the co-production of oral history in a print textualized format. The second goal of this work is to contribute methodologically to the continued development of engaged styles of community-based research, with the aim of

producing both new and innovative collaborative research strategies, particularly in research involving First Nations peoples.⁹⁸ My hope is to contribute to fostering the general advancement of post- disciplinary theory and practice regarding how research involving First Nations peoples is conducted.⁹⁹ My objective is to contribute to the continued and ongoing development of collaborative research strategies established by Indigenous communities, scholars and Stó:lō community members in particular. In my experience with Archie and his family over the years and upon reflecting on how he sought to include me and teach me, I have concluded that community-based research was more akin to family-based research.

The third intended contribution of this work is to support the Stó:lō community in culturally significant and practical ways. In accordance with heritage initiatives undertaken by the Stó:lō Nation, SRRMC and Stó:lō Tribal Council, is the Stó:lō caretaking principle relayed to me by Archie: “*Xólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát*. We have to look after everything that belongs to us.”

⁹⁸ Developing collaborative, community-based research strategies between academia and First Nations peoples has been a major concern of Indigenous peoples and scholars alike since the 1970s. However, it has recently been the subject of intense dialogue in a Canadian academic setting that has led to long overdue revisions of university ethics procedures involving research with First Nations peoples. Please see: Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, December 2010.

⁹⁹ In *Clio in Oceania: Towards a Historical Anthropology* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), anthropologist Alleta Biersack coined the term “post-disciplinary” scholarship to reflect an approach that draws upon research tools and strategies of multiple disciplines in a context-sensitive way suited to the particularities of a given research project (Biersack, *Clio*, 2). In this work I draw simultaneously on my background in anthropology, Indigenous and oral history as well as my experience as an anthropological “field” researcher and oral history interviewer, particularly in the Stó:lō community.

The fourth intended contribution of this project is to add depth to the historiography of Native-Newcomer relations in Canada, and specifically those of Stó:lō and *Xwelítem* relations as revealed through Archie's life history. This history provides a particular vantage point derived from his life experiences of continued colonial encounters and the impact such encounters have on people's lives over the course of generations. Archie's story provides valuable insight into a community's sustained encounter with colonialism in the Canadian context, but perhaps most importantly, it offers an articulation of an Indigenous perspective on the newcomer and specifically on views of research practice, a given project and the impact of a continued *Xwelítem* presence in Stó:lō lives. The following chapter outlines detail the means by which I hope to achieve these four goals.

Chapter Outlines

CHAPTER ONE: TELLING STORIES, LIVING HISTORY – TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LIFE NARRATIVE OF ARCHIE CHARLES

This chapter presents and analyzes my collaboration with Archie to record his told-to narrative and situates it more broadly within the historiography of the told-to genre. How did Archie act as narrator, editor and translator of his life history? How did my process of editing, framing, interpreting and fundamentally translating Archie's oral narrative to text unfold? As a man of great action and few words, what role did his silences and omissions play in the recording of his narrative? What did these silences reveal about him, how did he define reminiscences suitable for the private and public realms and the nature of Stó:lō oral history? How did the dual role I assumed as collaborator and 'spirit granddaughter' which Archie established for our learning (specifically) create opportunities and challenges in the production of his story?

CHAPTER TWO: *SQWÉLQWEL*, COMMUNITY, FAMILY, RELIGION AND GROWING UP ON SEABIRD ISLAND

This chapter introduces Archie and presents his oral history *sqwélqwel* “true news, family genealogy” relating to his adoption and early relocation to the Stó:lō community of Seabird Island to the home of his adoptive parents, Mary and Dave Charles. The late twenties and early thirties were a particularly challenging time economically for both newcomer and Stó:lō economies and Archie’s youth reveals the adaptive and innovative ways in which Stó:lō individuals and families maintained and shared resources of both natural and cultural variety in order to not only survive, but thrive in tough times and reveals the genesis of his ethos related to work, religion and education.

CHAPTER THREE: NATIVE AND CHRISTIAN – A MULTIGENERATIONAL TESTIMONIAL NARRATIVE OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND MEANING-MAKING

This chapter contributes to the emergent field of historical and religious studies that explores syncretic Indigenous belief systems and practices. Building upon the analysis of the residential school narratives of both Archie Charles and his adoptive mother Mary Charles I ask: How did Archie’s views of religion, spirituality, education and work produced from his formative experience at residential school and at home come into being throughout his life? How did he personally seek reconciliation of his residential school experience and how does this fit within a broader historiography and in the current movement taking place in Canada to resolve the legacy of the residential school system?

CHAPTER FOUR: THROUGH THE EYES OF A SOLDIER AND VETERAN – NEGOTIATING STÓ:LŌ IDENTITIES IN WAR AND PEACETIME

This chapter interprets and analyzes Archie Charles' experience of serving in the Canadian Army during WWII as a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI). Keith Carlson has advanced the thesis that immediately after the war (and contrary to the experiences of Indigenous veterans from other culture communities in Canada), Stó:lō veterans were regarded in a negative light due to the earlier largely-negative position of warriors ("stómex") in that society. So in this chapter I ask, how did the Stó:lō community come to view their veterans not as warriors, but as *Siyá:ms*, their highest leaders in the 1990s – after decades where veterans were marginalized as those who had embraced the violent antithesis of *Siyá:m* leadership? Archie's narrative demonstrates how he adapted the tools and strategies he gained from his military experience, both in terms of training and awareness of non-Stó:lō society, to become one of the most universally well-regarded traditional leaders in modern Stó:lō history.

CHAPTER FIVE: ELECTED STÓ:LŌ CHIEF AND *SIYÁ:M* – LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN AN ERA OF TRANSITIONAL NATIVE POLITICS

Archie held the post of elected Chief of Seabird Island for 28 years, from 1970-1998, making him the longest-serving elected official in Seabird Island history. By adopting a fluid and adaptive cultural identity, he managed to be highly innovative, all the while accepting traditions within the newly imposed colonial government structure. During his time as chief, his actions demonstrate that he was a proponent of reserve-based development, formal Western education, wage labour employment and commercial industry. Analysis of Archie's life experience and political career provides insight into an era of transitional native politics and highlights the impacts of colonialism on the pre-existing cultural roles and structures of leadership.

CHAPTER SIX: ARCHIE CHARLES AS *SIA:TELEQ* – ENACTING HEREDITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE STÓ:LŦ FIVE MILE FISHERY

The current efforts of scholars and the greater Stó:lŦ community to communicate the historical legitimacy of Stó:lŦ claims to the Canyon fishery *vis a vis* the claims of the Yale First Nation have proven inadequate, principally because they have not been completely contextualized.

Archie's narrative in this chapter adds depth regarding the existing Stó:lŦ caretaking system through an explanation of his own actions in life as a *Sia:teleq* or "caretaker" of a hereditary fishing ground and demonstrates the positive impact his approach has had on maintaining Stó:lŦ Rights and Title and use of cultural modes of conflict resolution even after his passing.

CONCLUSION: YOU NEVER SIT BY THE SAME RIVER TWICE - ASSESSING THE LEGACY OF ARCHIE CHARLES AND THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IN RECORDING HIS TOLD-TO NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I assess two interrelated components of this life history: first is the substantive content of Archie's told-to narrative and contribution to our current understanding of Stó:lŦ and Indigenous history and Native-Newcomer relations; second is the collaborative research process we undertook to record it. An examination of his life reveals a successful ethos and leadership style based on protection through education and inclusion.

CHAPTER ONE: TELLING STORIES, LIVING INTERPRETATION OF THE LIFE NARRATIVE



While at Archie's fishcamp in 2007, we had an experience that was both entertaining and enlightening for me about the politics of representation. A truck carrying woodchips had tipped over up on the highway, spilling its cargo all over the road. Some of the male family members at camp went up to check it out and see if they could collect some of the woodchips to help construct smoother pathways on the rugged terrain leading down from the highway to fishcamp – something that would benefit Archie especially, as he was at this time walking with a cane. A while later, the men - including Thomas Crey and Lewis George, Tina Jack's son - came back with a pickup truck full of wood chips for use on the pathways. Archie, who worked continuously while at camp despite his physical ailments, was sitting whittling a yew wood branch to use for a dip net pole. While he was sitting there, we all got the idea to pile the wood chips around his ankles to make it look like he had been whittling for days on end. We then took a second photo with the chips piled up all around him while he laughed. He remarked to me "tell your mom that's how we make an Indian toothpick!" We all got a good laugh out of that, and the photos of the experience were a highlight of our time spent together. But the photo was much more than a humorous joke.

Archie often used humour to teach – and I interpreted his joke about the photo as an observation by him of the power inherent in representing history. From this single photo, a whole and completely false cultural practice could potentially be represented. Archie, as mentioned previously, was no stranger to working with historians and anthropologists, and had been unhappy in the past in certain instances with the handling and representing of Stó:lō cultural knowledge and his contributions. The toothpick photo assumed two meanings: a wonderful memory of humour at fishcamp, and also a teaching tool for reflection. Archie alerted and reaffirmed to me, and those listening to his story, the "politics of representation" inherent in authorship that scholars such as Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, Julie Cruikshank and others have been saying over the past forty years.

“Each telling of a story, whether in speech or writing, generates another story, a story of relations between people and their worlds.”¹⁰⁰ In this chapter, I describe the collaborative process Archie and I undertook and situate it within the told-to narrative genre. Early reviews of this draft suggested that presenting Archie’s life story as a cohesive whole, on its own, does not reveal as much about his life as does exploring the nature of his silences and omissions. This was something I was initially reluctant to do for two reasons: I view him as an Elder and ultimate authority of his life, and then, following his passing because I was unable to follow up with him directly to learn more. As a result, this telling of his story reflects our collaborative process and asks broader questions about the nature of memory, authority, co-authorship, cultural forms of communication and the politics of representation. In this chapter, I outline what I did to act on my concerns related to the politics of representation. As a work of what literary scholars Gingell and Roy call “textualized orature”, I ask, how did Archie act as narrator, editor and translator of his life narrative? How did my process of editing, framing, interpreting and fundamentally translating Archie’s oral narrative to text unfold? How did the dual role I assumed as collaborator and spirit granddaughter which Archie established for our learning create opportunities and challenges in the production of his story? How did the resulting family-based engagement methodology I participated in flex and change over time to reflect the changing realities of our research? Finally, I will present how, in this emergent emic methodology, our dialogue evolved over time to include the contribution of multiple family and community members (“polylogue”).

¹⁰⁰ Murray and Rice, *Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts*, xi.

Editing Oral Texts: Conventions for the Transcription, Translation and Interpretation of Oral History

Oral history interviewing, of the kind utilized in this project, is a tool commonly used by social scientists, but particularly historians and anthropologists who “are seeking to understand the ways the narrator attributes meaning to their experience.”¹⁰¹ Leading oral historian Valerie Yow states “oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form”¹⁰², while oral historian Paul Thompson points to the use of oral history as being helpful to “understand change over time, to achieve not a static view of human experience but a dynamic view.”¹⁰³ As he writes:

Oral history is a connecting value that moves in all sorts of directions. It connects the old and the young, the academic and the world outside, but more specifically it allows us to make connections in the interpretation of history; for example, between different places, or different spheres, or different phases of life.¹⁰⁴

A direct consequence of the translation of oral history to written form (including speech, gesture and the most challenging of all, silence) is the transcription process and the specific conventions by which this is done. This delicate process of translation places a great amount of authority and power in the hands of the writer, editor and transcriber to determine what level of

¹⁰¹ Valerie Raleigh Yow. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, second edition. (Alta Mira Press, New York, London, Toronto, Plymouth, 2005), 9.

¹⁰² Yow, *Oral History*, 3. Yow qualifies that she is venturing to present this as a “working definition” of oral history (3), noting however that the term itself is much more complex and nuanced. For example, as described by Stó:lō knowledge keepers, there are distinct kinds of oral history (for examples *s̓xwō̓x̓wiyám* and *sqwélqwel*), highlighting the cultural specificity and diversity of what constitutes “oral history” in the Stó:lō world and elsewhere.

¹⁰³ Paul Thompson, “Believe it or not: Re-thinking the Historical Interpretation of Memory” in *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, ed Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall, 1-16 (New York: University Press of America, 1994), 11.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

nuance and emphasis of the speaker to include or exclude. Consideration of these interpretive elements involved in the translation of speakers' words, gestures and silences to writing on the page is an area of discussion among anthropologists and oral historians and demanded consideration on my part when working with Archie's words. As stressed in the article "Resisting the Editorial Ego", "Oral history is what comes out of people's mouths, and it has to be captured accurately on paper...What is on the tape is what actually happened. What is on the tape is what was actually said. It is history already written on the wind."¹⁰⁵ Conventions related to transcription and translation of speech to text involves a myriad of practical, ethical and moral editorial decisions by the writer. As a work of textualized orature, I drew upon standards within the fields of oral history and ethnography¹⁰⁶ that proved useful and formed a starting point for the translation and editing of my interviews with Archie Charles and other Stó:lō community and family members. As Yow suggests, it is essential to transcribe spoken words verbatim,¹⁰⁷ adding that "the least possible tampering with the primary source – according the most respect for the narrator's unique way of speaking – is the best way."¹⁰⁸ The syntax of the speaker is considered a valuable aspect of their means of communicating by oral historian Sherry Thomas who stresses

¹⁰⁵ Susan Emily Allan, "Resisting the Editorial Ego: Editing Oral History" in *Oral history Review* 10 (1982): 33-45, 35.

¹⁰⁶ The Oral History Association provides useful guidelines for transcription as does the work *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History*. By Donna M. DeBlasio, Charles F. Ganzert, David H. Mould, Stephen H. Paschen, and Howard L. Sacks (eds). (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, Swallow Books, 2009). Consideration about the transcription of Aboriginal oral history has been addressed in works such as Laura J Murray and Karen Rice (eds) *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts* 1996 and Devon A. Mishuah *So You Want To Write About American Indians?: A Guide For Writers, Students, And Scholars*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Yow, *Oral History*, 325.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 327.

that efforts to “smooth over” texts are problematic. In her article “Digging Beneath The Surface: Oral History Techniques” she observes “almost nobody carefully puts all the g’s at the end of a word. When you do that, and add presupposition to make the sentence read smoothly, you change the feel of the personality of the speaker and obscure his or her reality.”¹⁰⁹ With Archie, a man of few words, the value of including supplementary context for his silences, gestures and the setting of our discussions is apparent. I do my best to present Archie’s words using the most comprehensive rendering possible of his tone, cadence and speech-style and also endeavour to present that which is not evident to audio listeners and readers of his words. Yow also points out that the transcription of certain conventions of speech has things such as false starts and repetition of terms (aka “crutch terms”) that are also worthy of consideration. Yow points to the value of including “false starts” as they are indicators of speech patterns, a practice I have maintained throughout our transcripts. “Crutch words” are phrases such as “well” and “you know” which speakers repeat throughout conversation. Yow stresses that while they may make reading speech more convoluted, their presence may go beyond just a speech pattern and may indicate deeper levels of personal expression and significance. For this reason, Archie’s false starts are included in my transcripts as they provide a window into the changing dynamics of our dialogue. Sociologist Marjorie Devault states, “In many instances, ‘you know’ seems to mean something like “OK this next bit is going to be a little tricky. I can’t say it quite right, but help me out a little; meet me halfway and you’ll understand what I mean.”¹¹⁰ Devault concludes “If this is so, it provides a new way to think about these data. ‘You know’ no longer seems like

¹⁰⁹ Sherry Thomas, “Digging Beneath The Surface: Oral History Techniques,” *Frontiers* 8, no.1 (1983), 52.

¹¹⁰ Marjorie L Devault, “Talking and Listening from a Woman’s Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis”: *Social Problems* 37 no. 1 (February 1990): 96-116, 103.

stumbling inarticulateness, but appears to signal a request for understanding.”¹¹¹ On these complex collaborative dynamics at play in the translation of told-to narratives, Sarris writes:

One party may write a story, but one party’s story is no more the whole story than a cup of water is the river. While this may seem obvious, it underscores what it is when we tell, transcribe or write about oral texts. Basically, in one form or another, when we deal with oral texts, whether orally or literally, we continue their life in very specific ways.¹¹²

Recording and Editing Aboriginal Oral History and Tradition: Considerations

In recent years, a number of Aboriginal scholars in Canada and the U.S. have written about research based on recording Aboriginal oral tradition, including best practices to consider when listening to, bearing witness to and/or preserving Aboriginal oral history and tradition.¹¹³ I take inspiration from literature scholar Sophie McCall who contests the silent role of editor and translator in told-to narratives. McCall suggests instead that a focus be placed upon “the degrees of authorship and degrees of collaboration between storytellers, recorders, translators, editors and authors...”¹¹⁴ as a way of circumventing the historical implications of:

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Sarris, *Slug Woman*, 40.

¹¹³ The privilege ascribed by the West to written records has fostered a continued resistance to the inclusion of Aboriginal oral history and tradition as a historical record of equal measure in various settings such as the classroom and the courts. This has been challenged by numerous anthropologists, historians and Aboriginal scholars. Notable examples of scholarship relevant to this work include: Renee Hulan and Renate Eigenbrod book *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory, Practice and Ethics* (2008) and notable Canadian examples of formalized, theoretical and institutional guidelines governing the use of Aboriginal traditional knowledge and oral history include SSHRC, NAHO and RCAP.

¹¹⁴ McCall, *First Person*, 2.

collector-editors [who] have submitted the oral performance to numerous changes, omissions, and manipulations, while claiming sole authorship on the title page. At the same time, the editors have effaced their intervention, stating in the preface that the story is in the narrator's own 'voice.'¹¹⁵

In anthropologist Del Hymes' 1982 work *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*, which made an important contribution to the emergent field ethno-poetics, he writes about discovering oral and measured verse in Aboriginal oral texts. Through his structural analysis of Aboriginal oral performance, Hymes' work illustrates that while distinct from Western written texts, Aboriginal oral performance share the same status and possess a merit all its own. Hymes also introduces readers to the concept of *metaphrasis*,¹¹⁶ the process by which the speaker uses "the structural, conventional performance system itself as a resource for creative manipulation, as a base on which a number of communicative transformations can be wrought."¹¹⁷ Central to Hymes' concept of performance is an emphasis on the impact of inter-subjective elements involved in cross-cultural fieldwork:

The structure of performance events can change, or new structures may emerge, depending on contextual conditions. If one considers the presence of the fieldworker as real, and thus a variable, in the so-called native domain, what constitutes a frame in the speech event the fieldworker records and describes is likely to depend on and emerge from that context. The fieldworker cannot know about frames independent of their presence. What the fieldworker sees is not so much how the whole community keys speech events for its members but rather how it keys them for the fieldworker specifically.¹¹⁸

For this reason, I stress that it is a worthwhile endeavour to listen to our interview audio recordings. Not only does this allow the Archie's oral tradition to more fully come to life, it

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Del Hymes, *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 87.

¹¹⁷ Sarris, *Slug Woman*, 19.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

serves to illustrate the dialogical dynamics produced between us as speaker and as listener and the subsequent choices made by myself in terms of how to frame and present aspects of Archie's vast knowledge. As Hymes suggests, the content and form of the story narrative is clearly shaped by the intended audience. Speakers adjust their version of the story to suit not only the listener, but also take into account the broader audience and particularly anticipated readership of the material. Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin raises questions about the possibilities and limitations of communication through dialogue. In *The Dialogical Imagination* (1982), Bakhtin states that all written representations of reality and experience are limited by the discursive categories within which they are constructed. Bakhtin posits that it is only through dialogue that we can circumvent the limitations which a written text presents – namely that it is shaped by historical, social, cultural and literary features which exist both outside it and which permeate its being. Challenges made regarding the “politics of memory” and the subjective nature of collaborative dynamics inherent in recording oral and life histories have been further addressed by numerous scholars such as British anthropologist Paul Atkinson in *Understanding Ethnographic Texts* (1992). Inspired by the cultural theorist Roland Barthes and historian Hayden White, Atkinson asks scholars to consider how “textual conventions do not merely raise technical or methodological issues: they have moral consequences.”¹¹⁹ Atkinson also articulates a growing trend to focus on readership, not just authorship, which is the focus of more traditional texts. Literary scholars Susan Gingell and Wendy Roy further stress the value of deconstructing the term “audience”, particularly the role the audience plays in determining the structure and form of textual conventions related to transmission of orature. Roy and Gingell state: “variables

¹¹⁹ Paul Atkinson, *Understanding Ethnographic Texts* (Newbury Park, Calif.; London: Sage Publications 1992), 6.

in audience constitution include the degree to which members are active or passive; what roles they play in performance and when; and whether they are primary, secondary or tertiary audiences.” I take inspiration from the discussion of Gingell, Roy, Bahktin and Atkinson regarding readership and audience and seek to apply these thoughts in practical ways in this life history project. I appreciate that Archie’s oral narrative as spoken to me is fundamentally textualized, becoming more akin to what scholars Gingell and Roy termed “textualized orature”.

As Gingell and Roy describe:

This process of remaking orature can entail transcription, translation, digitizing, other forms of technological mediation, or some combination of the foregoing. Textualized orality is, by analogy, the technological mediation of a social and cultural group’s ways of communicating orally in combination with any idiolectal speech characteristics – that is, those specific to an individual’s language variety.¹²⁰

Examples of works that thoughtfully consider audience in the genre of Aboriginal told-to narratives include scholar Greg Sarris’ and Richard Daly’s work with Stó:lō Elder Rena Point Bolton. Daly, for example, sets out “interpretive road maps” which suggest ways of reading that text for both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō readers, while in *Keeping Slug Woman Alive*, Sarris utilizes structural conventions to shift between narrative voices. Without question, Archie’s oral history as spoken to me (and other scholars he chose to share his knowledge with) has been fundamentally de- and re-textualized once written, framed and interpreted. Consideration of the distinct audiences who have an interest in Archie’s life history - the immediate family, the greater Stó:lō community and my academic peers - has directly impacted the forms Archie’s life history will take. This dissertation is considered valuable to Archie and his family members with whom I have discussed it. However, in speaking with some of Archie’s family following his

¹²⁰ Gingell and Roy, *Listening*, 13.

passing, we discussed the possibility of producing a separate book specifically for the family. As a visual-print, textualized version of his spoken words, it will foreground the substantive content of his life history over the analytical elements required for this dissertation. I have also discussed with Archie's family ways we can work together to reframe his life history oral interviews to create a textualized audio-video life history documentary DVD. I take inspiration from Canadian anthropologist Wendy Wickwire's discussion of her role as editor of Okanagan Elder Harry Robinson's stories: "I have tried to present the stories exactly as told"¹²¹, while also searching for "a presentational style to capture the nuance of the oral tradition - the emphasis on certain phrases, intentional repetition, and dramatic rhythms and pauses. I have, therefore, set the stories in lines which mirror as closely as possible Harry's rhythms of speech."¹²²

As mentioned, Archie's show, not tell communication style is in direct opposition to the style of orature and oral performance in which Harry Robinson engaged Wickwire. How did his style of narration impact this work and how have I sought to resolve the tension that arises from drawing upon oral history of an individual who shows, not tells, who he is? One way I have attempted to resolve this tension is by including his silences, gestures and actions within the transcription process. I drew upon the following conventions of transcription for oral history interviews set forth by leading oral historian Valerie Yow¹²³: "... " is an "ellipse" which indicates a sentence that is unfinished. If the narrator trails off then begins a new sentence, a period then an ellipse is used. ", " is used to indicate a brief pause, a "- " is used to indicate an

¹²¹ Wendy Wickwire (ed) and Harry Robinson. *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1989), 15.

¹²² Ibid, 7.

¹²³ Yow, *Oral History*, 317-320

interruption of thought and words the narrator has emphasized are italicized. Parentheses can be used to describe the type of interruption of the discussion to add context and/or to include reference to non-verbal gestures. Square brackets are used to spell out full titles and add supplementary information, while “inaudible” indicates an unknown or unheard term. When relevant, I have also added information about the setting of our interview and the subtle body language and gestures that Archie used that cannot be communicated through audio recordings.

Archie Charles: An Historian in Spirit and a Man of Few Words

As Salish scholar Jo-Ann Archibald states of her work with Stó:lō Elders that “[n]ot all Elders are storytellers...”¹²⁴ Certainly, Archie was not a storyteller in the conventional sense of the word. Like Archibald, though, I appreciate that being a trained storyteller or orator is only one way that Stó:lō cultural knowledge is held, lived and shared/transmitted in a good way. Archie, along with other Stó:lō Elders, sought to pass on his knowledge and experience in a good way, a humble way. In Archie’s case, this centred upon acting as a visionary for the development of his community and his ability to maintain tradition in an adaptable and fluid way in the fast-changing world his generation lived in.

Many of my conversations with Archie took place at his home in Seabird Island. (see **Figure 1.1**) Upon entering Archie’s and Tina’s home, there is palpable sense of comfort, ease and warmth. I reflected on this warmth often, writing once how it felt like “the safest place in the world”. One of Archie’s favourite topics of conversation was his family, what I would come to understand as his *sqwélqwel*, which we had many conversations about – both formally and

¹²⁴ Archibald, *Storywork*, 13.

informally. Archie's voice had a strong and deep, yet almost whisper-like tone. Always choosing his words thoughtfully and using them sparingly, strong beliefs he held would often be conveyed through dropping the register of his voice or by a dismissive gesture such as a waving of the hand or shake of the head accompanied by silence or a laugh. Often when we spoke Archie would preface a thought with "yeah" or "oh yeah" signalling a sort of agreement to the flow of the conversation and topics we were discussing. Many of our discussions began with a cup of coffee in the kitchen, where he was surrounded by photos of the family on all walls. This seemed to inspire talk of family, with Archie providing updates on family members, anecdotes about their successes and challenges and musings about life. It became apparent over time that there was a connection between memory and place, with the location and timing of our interview acting as a mnemonic inspiration, and so I made attempts to interview Archie about his life in various environments, including home, fishcamp and on days of special significance to him (Remembrance Day, for example).

As I have come to understand, and continue to learn about, the complex nature and meaning of *sqwélqwel*, I can appreciate the role Archie had as a keeper of this knowledge. The *sqwélqwel* presented in this dissertation is based in large part on these conversations, which often included other family members as well. Archie was an historian in his own right, carrying knowledge of his family genealogy but also pursuing research of his own about Stó:lō history, Rights and Title and other First Nations histories. As previously mentioned, not only did he hold the role as a keeper of his family *sqwélqwel*, he held a similar role as *Sia:teleq* of his hereditary fishing grounds, co-ordinating family access, use and occupation of the site based on his knowledge of complex family relations. He studied the knowledge of his people from many

perspectives, viewing it through a personal lens, engaging in discussion with others, reading about what had been written (more so in the public sphere than the scholarly field), and enjoyed the act of engaging in the preservation and celebration of his culture.¹²⁵

How Did We Speak? Interviewing: The Art and Practice of “Doing Nothing”

“Doing nothing” runs counter to what we are typically told is a productive way to spend our time, particularly work time. And yet, within the context of engaged learning with Archie, “doing nothing” was a powerful means of absorbing information – particularly cross-culturally. In reflecting upon the unfolding of my methodology, the practice of “doing nothing” in the way in which I describe produced the possibility for learning in a deep way, as it is at once about being prepared (having done the work), being committed and connected (putting oneself in position for desirable outcomes), and then being open. However, as Daly states, given “[k]nowledge is always in circulation among and between people, which opens up the possibility of knowing things in common”¹²⁶, accepting the value of a practice of “doing nothing” as I described it above has been especially important in working with Elder Archie Charles over the past years, for he was a man of action and few words. A truly humble speaker, he often chose to

¹²⁵ He enjoyed and maintained a collection of history books as well as *National Geographic* magazines. He also cherished his “museum” featuring Aboriginal artwork, particularly Stó:lō and *Nlaka’pamux* basketry.

¹²⁶ Daly and Bolton, *Xwelíqwiya*, xlv.

show, not tell who he was and what he believed, something he attributed not to his Stó:lō cultural traditions but, interestingly, to his training in the military.¹²⁷

Formal interviews between Archie and me about his life history took place between 2006 and 2010, and we were in touch right up to days before his passing. However, the majority of our conversations were informal and fluid in nature; while I recorded and transcribed many of them, the context for my learning was built through spending time with him and his family in a variety of settings over time. Often our conversations would take place over a period of days, punctuated by breaks for meals, conducting errands together and while engaging in multiple conversations with family members amidst the hubbub of family activity that was his home. As our relationship grew, the possibility for learning grew as well, as I spent time at his house visiting, attending social events with him and his family, celebrating family birthdays, sharing meals at his favourite Chinese restaurant in Chilliwack, camping up at fishcamp and speaking regularly on the phone when I was back in Ontario. Often our phone conversations would go on for hours, as this seemed to be a focused way for us to discuss memories and served him better as his health, including his hearing, began to decline. As he continued to lose his hearing, the phone also served as a way to block out the background noise of his busy home, the centre of social and familial activity. This background noise was occasionally an impediment to our face-to-face conversations and at times led to him mishearing my questions. When this took place, Archie would answer the question I posed with an answer to a question I had not asked and had no

¹²⁷ Archie Charles interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009. This quality of Archie's nature was also observed by colleagues of his I spoke with, such as Grand Chief Kat Pennier. See Kat Pennier, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

context for. And yet, it is my belief that the information that is meant to come out is what comes out and have found that these “mis-answers” often held important information. I would use these opportunities to both re-ask my initial question and to follow up with him about the information that he had shared. Learning in this manner – staying actively engaged to interpret words but also silence - requires, and is well suited to “going with the flow” – embracing learning on all levels, in such a way as to include all senses of perception, and not relying exclusively on formal interviews.

Finding Common Ground Through Dialogue

Through the process of recording Archie’s life history, I have come to understand that it is at once also the history of his family, his ancestors, his home and his community. In accordance with Stó:lō principles of caretaking, each story, while separate, inextricably links together past, present and future generations. Given the aforementioned colonial disruption and my understanding of the role, value and importance of *sqwélqwel* within Stó:lō culture and, more specifically, Archie’s life, I took to heart my role as collaborator in recording his life history. In the time following Archie’s passing, moving forward with the life history, particularly recording the details of his genealogy, verification of his words (and more challenging, his silences) felt like a monumental task. Archie’s family history, like all of ours, is complex and nuanced, but perhaps his more so due to the sheer scope of his adoptive and biological family trees and the central importance that “knowing your history” has within Stó:lō culture.

The verification process in our project was divided into two parts: prior to and subsequent to Archie’s passing. Prior to Archie’s passing, I sought him out to fill in information he had

shared with me or topics for which I simply needed clarification. One example of this ongoing verification process involves Archie's *sqwélqwel*, specifically the name "Mary", which was shared by both his adoptive and biological mothers and by his first wife. In his recounting of memories, often he would not distinguish which Mary he was referring to. While in some cases the reference was obvious, there were multiple occasions when I had to clarify with him which Mary he was in fact talking about. I also had to confirm this with his family on occasion after his passing. Archie's family have been extremely supportive and helpful, providing me with information as much as they can.

The context of my understanding of and familiarity with his family structure, Stó:lō protocols for the maintenance and transmission of *sqwélqwel* and his narrative style grew over years. And with each passing year there was a greater capacity for mutual understanding that occurred from our dialogue. The need for continual effort to establish and re-establish common ground and understanding through dialogue is addressed by numerous scholars including cultural theorist Jurgen Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2* (1987). It is here that Habermas posits his influential theory that all communication must be based on free will, action and dialogue in order to achieve the goal and ideal of communication, which is to be liberating and emancipatory. The dialogical nature of communication to which Habermas alerted us, of continued interest to oral historians and anthropologists, extends the earlier work of Austrian cultural theorists Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, whose 1973 text, *Structures of the Life World* sought to establish the importance of the concept of the "life world" – or "*Leibweshaft*". The *life world* is a key concept of phenomenology, which philosopher of phenomenology Edmund Husserl originally used to include the realm of daily, lived experience within a

historical reality. It emphasizes the conscious and unconscious acts which are both material and social. For philosophers Schutz and Luckmann, it was the social elements of the *life world* which were of interest, a focus shared in the 1970s and 1980s by many ethnographers and by interpretive and postmodern anthropologists. Most notably, this focus shaped the works of Clifford Geertz, and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) which drew on Schutz's discussion of "familiarity" and "taken-for-grantedness", key features of the *life world*. If the *life world* is understood to hold within it the conscious and unconscious acts of an individual and group, then it follows that researchers engaged in cross-cultural collaboration should integrate the concept into their work as a way of situating their dialogue and begin the process of understanding, interpreting and analyzing other cultural norms. The continual building and rebuilding of a shared context for transmission of knowledge cross-culturally - of establishing common ground in a *life world* - was central to my work with Archie. Over time, I came to understand in a more holistic way the Stó:lō *life world* in which his *sqwéłqwel* and experience was situated, though I am still learning and anticipate that this will be an ongoing learning process. Our collaborative learning process mirrored in many ways what historian Celia Haig-Brown termed "research as chat"¹²⁸ – a research dynamic in which, over time, the communicative process shifts from formal interviews to something closer to "chat."

Building upon the role of "chat" in research dialogue, Stó:lō scholar Jo-ann Archibald's discussion of her process of moving from formal interviews to "chat" closely mirrors my experience with Archie. She describes a dynamic similar to my experience with Archie: "Research as conversation is characterized as an open-ended interview with opportunity for both

¹²⁸ Celia Haig-Brown, "Choosing Border Work." *Canadian Journal of Education* (19, 1: 96-116, 1992), 104-05.

sides to engage in talk rather than one party doing most of the talking. Research as chat occurs when the researcher is very familiar with the participant(s) and they interact on a frequent basis.”¹²⁹ The blessing and strength of the familial-type relationship Archie and I established over the years we knew each other and worked together was evidenced in how his direct family members made themselves available to provide ongoing support of this project. They have assisted me since his passing in answering any and all questions I have had as well as helping select and copy photographs for use. His partner, Tina Jack, stepdaughter Caroline Credico and step great-grandson Zack Joe (*Nwéwtin*), and daughter Rose Charles have been invaluable to this project proceeding.

The Spirit of Collaboration: The Role of Biography

Relationships are about spirit: the spirit within people and how the past, present and future intersect to create opportunities to connect with, and learn from, one another. Our biographies determined our accepted roles together and consequently formed the content and form of this version of Archie’s life history. For this reason, I believe it is important to reflect upon how our biographies shaped our individual and shared intentions for this work. As I see it, our wonderful collaborative relationship was the result of a confluence of many factors; with the timing of our work being of significance. Archie was at a point in his life where he was reflecting on the totality of his life experience. As a person whose legacy is embedded in his ethos centred upon the pragmatic application of his knowledge in community and family leadership, the timing of the project was critical. Had we met some twenty years earlier, he likely

¹²⁹ Archibald, *Storywork*, 47.

would have had less interest and time to devote to this work. Growing up as I did with my grandmother in the house - also a woman of soft kindness, compassion for others, values which were lived but rarely spoken and quiet qualities of leadership, I became poised to be engaged in listening deeply to my Elders. My formative relationship with her shaped me profoundly in drawing me to my work doing oral history interviews with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Elders over the past fifteen years. So the manner in which Archie most desired to work with me – making me an honorary family member in the role of granddaughter – spoke to my heart and bonded us together very closely. Beyond that, Archie and I shared a mutual love of people, road-trips and adventure and despite the apparently extensive differences in our genders, ages and cultural histories, we had both lived and worked in logging camps and had spent much time on the road while maintaining a fierce loyalty and love of family despite periods of separation. Archie loved hearing about people’s travels and experiences and understood when I couldn’t be “there” with him or his family in British Columbia for mine was back in Ontario, often saying he new I would be back and saying “I love you and tell all those people out there hello from me.” I valued Archie’s quiet sense of humour and the laughter, joking and teasing that were part of Archie and Tina’s daily life. His plays on words (such as giving me the Stó:lō name “*Telhw̓ha*”) instilled a spirit of understated joy and fun to our shared time and discussions. Much like the home I grew up in where quick wit and turn of phrase were valued as a means of bonding, so it was with Archie and Tina.

In 2010, the last year of Archie’s life, he, Tina, grandson Zack, daughter Rose and great-granddaughter Natasha “*Talks a lot*” set out to travel from British Columbia to my home in Ontario by camper. Archie liked the idea of coming to spend time with my family, “where I was

from” as I was the one who always travelled to him and his family. This kind of balanced reciprocation was at the core of our relationship. Unfortunately, they only made it halfway to Saskatchewan, and while not attaining the original goal of the road trip, Archie and his family delighted in seeing the sights and learning about the history of Native people in that region. Despite his ailing health he was exhilarated by the trip.

It was always important for Archie to give back, something I witnessed and experienced many times. I recall him handing me a hundred dollar bill and instructing me to “take your family out to dinner and buy your mom some flowers.” When I thanked him, typical of his understated style of speech and desire to let his actions speak for themselves, he simply said “Good-O!” and walked away. So, although superficial differences of age, gender, culture and ethnicity existed, our bond was formed by the roles we played in spirit with one another – that of granddaughter and grandfather. By absorbing me into this clearly defined role, he provided me with access to a wealth of time and experience together with him and his family and produced great possibilities for cross-cultural learning. Much like the salmon and their four-year life cycle, Archie’s passing marked the beginning of the second “life-cycle” of this project. Challenges of interpretation, distance, feelings of loss and sadness presented themselves when he passed that could not be filled immediately through critical thought and analysis or within the confines of this academic work. By drawing me into his family structure and giving me a role (of granddaughter) that was natural and comfortable to me, Archie shaped my role as chronicler, interpreter and critic. These roles established the foundation for how we talked, when we talked and what we talked about and what our shared experience was. These roles also determined where our silences lay.

Archie as Narrator: Interpretation of Words, Silence, Public and Private Memories

Of relevance to this project is the statement: “Just as the collector editor selects, interprets, shapes and determines the form of the narratives, so too does the narrator choose, arrange and order her memories.”¹³⁰ It is important to state that despite having agreed upon the goal of working with Archie to record his life story his story emerged in bits and pieces, with information usually revealed as part of connections he was making to something else. It is safe to say, from my experience with him as a narrator, that Archie did not like talking explicitly about himself. He would relate stories of himself only if they connected to something bigger. As noted in the *Introduction*, while he had worked with scholars throughout his life, Archie did not particularly present knowledge to suit the needs of the scholars. Archie was very much a reluctant informant in that, as a pragmatist, he left it to those around him to pick up on and engage with him in what he was *doing*, not listen to him speak about it at length. Within some life history works in the told-to genre, the explicit goal is to express and reflect the speaker’s agenda in writing be it personal, social, cultural or political. For example, in the case of George Manuel’s *Fourth World*, the goal was to further Aboriginal education initiatives while for Elder Harry Robinson, the aim was to transmit in writing the oral narratives he had learned throughout his life. Archie, however, did not make explicit to me how his agenda fit into our collaboration, or even what that agenda was. This resulted in me having to tease out his purpose, reflect upon it and attempt to frame his life story in the way that best reflected his hopes and intentions. Perhaps this is why I deemed it so important to emphasize the topics that Archie chose to discuss most frequently. I took my direction from him regarding what he chose to speak directly about and

¹³⁰ McCall, *First Person*, 7.

what he chose to omit, or only touch upon briefly. The majority of our time spent talking related to his actions in the public sphere, particularly in the realms of politics, community development and Stó:lō Rights and Title to the fishery. The greatest number of silences and omissions about how he made meaning out of his life were in the private sphere – including such significant events as the premature and tragic deaths of both of his biological children, his experience at Kamloops Residential School and details of his military action overseas. However, in her essay “Private Stories in Aboriginal Literature”, literature scholar Kristina Fagan proposes that divisions about what constitutes private and public knowledge in Aboriginal literature mirror Archie’s framing of his story along such lines. She examines a number of autobiographical and told-to narratives, observing “early Aboriginal autobiographies differ significantly from the typical Western autobiography, which is based in revealing of the author’s private life and thoughts.”¹³¹ Fagan draws upon two Aboriginal autobiographies as examples of this: Inuit author Lydia Campbell, and Stó:lō logger Hank Pennier’s *Chiefly Indian*:

[D]espite the personal tone in both Campbell’s and Pennier’s work, they are notably careful about what they share with their readers... Campbell, for instance, scarcely mentions her relationships with her two husbands or the deaths of many of her children, topics that would form the core of a typical Western autobiography; she focuses instead on community history, traditional stories, and the daily details of her work. Pennier similarly does not mention the details of his personal life.¹³²

Fagan further notes that: “Unlike the Western autobiographical tradition, which emphasizes personal introspection and development, the works of Campbell and Pennier can

¹³¹ Kristina Fagan, “Private Stories in Aboriginal Literature”, in *Orality and Literacy: Reflections Across Disciplines*. (Eds) Keith Thor Carlson, Kristina Fagan and Natalia Khanenko-Friesen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011)153-175,162.

¹³² Ibid.

instead be seen as part of a tradition that emphasizes the shared and social aspects of communication.”¹³³ There are parallels between Fagan’s analysis that, “The line between the private and the public...has been drawn differently within Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian societies”,¹³⁴ and how Archie framed his life – his focus was distinctly on pragmatic *action* in the public realm: fishing, politics and community development, rather than on the details of his private life. He also spoke at great length about genealogies and the members of his adopted, biological and step families. While he addressed powerful, challenging and meaningful events in the private realm such as death, abuse, loss, separation and addiction, he did so in sparse terms and with a distinct focus on lessons learned.

The dynamic relationship between presenting history in the private and public realms and orality and literacy can be seen in Fagan’s observation that: “The assumption that speech is an act, that it can create (and not just reflect) reality, and that one must therefore be careful with it, is widely shared in Aboriginal societies.”¹³⁵ Furthermore, “In such cultural contexts, where speaking is seen as risky, not speaking can become a preferred response to an uncomfortable situation...”¹³⁶ In Stó:lō society in particular, privacy protocols involving the maintenance of oral history (both *sqwélqwel* and *sxwōxwiyám*) maintain and reinforce a class system for “upper class Stó:lō who maintained their status in part through the maintenance of ‘private or guarded knowledge’ they would not share with the lower class.”¹³⁷

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 154.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 155.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 156.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Archie often used humour to frame his experiences, especially those which were most challenging and painful. He also typically employed a positive emphasis, a “tone” very apparent in his reminiscences of his military and residential school experience. His focus was very much on what lessons he had learned and how he had applied those lessons throughout his life. One example of how close family members served to add meaning and context to Archie’s life experience which he did not share directly can be seen in his recollections of his adoption. While he spoke with me about the circumstances of his adoption, it was only through listening to his mother Mary Charles, who described the stress that Archie felt at times as a young man about being adopted that a more fully rounded narrative of this life experience emerged. As it turns out, the process of recording and interpreting Archie’s life history has revealed that Archie’s life history is as much about his actions and silence(s) as it is about words spoken. I echo Fagan’s conclusion based on her analysis of particular works of Aboriginal textualized orature:

... Aboriginal people are capable of holding orality and literacy, act and text, private and public in tension, of seeing the usefulness and dangers of each. Furthermore, by being aware of this active engagement in Aboriginal literature, we can see the marked silences, the areas of privacy in so much of the literature, not as literary failings, but as deliberate choices about what should or should not be told.¹³⁸

Over time, our dialogue constituted a form of active engagement even when it was silence that was being communicated. Archie’s silences and omissions became areas that illuminated the personal and culturally defined ways he made meaning out of his experience and led to specific considerations I made in terms of the recording, interpreting, framing, verifying and ultimately translating his stories and memories.

¹³⁸ Fagan, “Private Stories”, 171.

Cultural Protocols for Communicating *Sqwéłqwel*: Addressing Critical Appraisal Locally and Culturally

I acted upon my concerns regarding the politics of representation Archie alerted me to through our discussion of the “Indian toothpick” in a number of ways. One way was to ensure that the relevant cultural protocols that govern communication were included. In *The Man Made of Words*, Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday describes the value and status of oral history and tradition in First Nations cultures: “In the oral tradition stories are told not merely to entertain or instruct; they are told to be believed. Stories are not subject to the imposition of such questions as true or false, fact or fiction. Stories are realities lived and believed.”¹³⁹

While it is the very existence of the strong rapport between Archie and me that provided us with the unique opportunity to work on this project together, I also bear in mind the concern established within anthropological and oral history literature regarding critical appraisal and the politics of memory. These concerns are particularly relevant in this type of deeply engaged research based on a sustained dialogue. Yet to be effective and in keeping with the goals of Participatory Action Research (PAR), methods for verification must be locally and culturally grounded to be meaningful. One way in which I sought to be inclusive of concerns related to the politics of memory was to include specific Stó:lō cultural principles of communication in the design and conduct of the research. Sonny McHalsie, Stó:lō cultural advisor and contributor to the 2007 publication *Be of Good Mind; Essays on the Coast Salish*, explained to me in our discussions about the project:

So, speaking to those who come by [fish] camp would be a good idea. And it would be better if not in his presence as well. One of our customs or protocols is not to speak

¹³⁹ N. Scott Momaday, *The Man Made of Words* (New York: St. Martens Press, 1997), 3.

highly of someone in their presence. For a couple of reasons, the first, the way the Elders express it is that, the person who speaks highly and in front could appear to be doing it for their own status and could also appear to the person being spoken about as not sincere.¹⁴⁰

There exists a powerful spiritual dimension to the transmission of Stó:lō oral narratives that requires consideration in order to fully appreciate this form of cultural knowledge as well as the shape a verification process may take. Keith Carlson describes the symbiotic relationship that exists between speaker and listener and the “truthful” recollection of events: for while the speaker of *sqwélqwel* is trusted to speak truthfully,

...the decision to enrich the *sqwélqwel* so as to make it entertain is not incorrect. Nor is it the sole prerogative of the speaker to decide when a *sqwélqwel* should be enhanced. This is not to say that the accuracy of a story is simply a function of a social situation the speaker finds him or herself in (*sqwélqwel* are not simply responses to the perceived needs of an audience of listeners).¹⁴¹

Carlson further elaborates:

Rather, many Coast Salish consider that on certain (possibly most or all) occasions, *sqwélqwel* are composed and shared not only with the intention of telling people how things happened, or what happened, but also to create special spiritual contexts. Emotions are generally regarded as being directed or guided by omnipresent ancestral spirits.¹⁴²

I have had experiences with this dimension while speaking with certain Elders. Elder Mel Bailey would refer to the ancestors as “giving him permission” to “let the words flow” in our conversations. On another occasion, in a recent oral history interview I conducted with Seabird Island Elder Ivan McIntyre, he paused during our discussion and shared that the ancestors were talking in his ear (a spiritual gift he carries), passing on information to him specifically meant to

¹⁴⁰ Informal Correspondence, Sonny McHalsie and Meagan Gough, July 9, 2007.

¹⁴¹ Carlson, “Indigenous Memory”, 5.

¹⁴² Ibid.

be shared with me, not the topic of our conversation (information I received as a gift). He described the process: “They mention things we might not have thought of. And it’s not really coming from us; it’s coming from the spirits.”¹⁴³ When information is communicated in this way, he reiterated “it needs to come out.”¹⁴⁴

Salish scholar Jo-ann Archibald’s term “Storywork” further supports a holistic understanding of the inextricable connection between the content of knowledge communicated through Stó:lō oral history and the complex system that informs what information is passed on when, how, by whom and for what purposes. While her work more broadly seeks to establish a holistic context for understanding and integrating Indigenous orality into contemporary models of education and pedagogy, it proves useful in understanding the multiple elements of Stó:lō oral narratives. She describes that “An Indigenous philosophical concept of holism refers to the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual (metaphysical values and beliefs and the Creator), emotional, and physical (body and behaviour/action) realms to form a whole healthy person.”¹⁴⁵ As a result, knowledge passed on by ancestral spirits via the transmission of oral history may be understood holistically within the context of Stó:lō culture and held with the same authority as the narrative, as communicated by the speaker. In keeping with the practice of “oral footnoting”, the words of ancestral spirits are acknowledged by those who carry spiritual gifts to interpret them and pass them on. After Archie’s passing, in a phone visit with Tina, she shared her thoughts about the spiritual dimension of our work: “It was meant to be that you spent

¹⁴³ Ivan McIntyre, interview with Meagan Gough, May 5, 2011, SRRMC TRM.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Archibald, *Storywork*, 11.

time with Papa, since before you were born, and that's the way it had to be.”¹⁴⁶ Whether one believes this to be “true” or not, it provided me with a deep sense of meaning and connectedness that went beyond the intellectual process of “doing research” with Archie about his life.

Sounds of Silence: Verification of Omissions, Silences and Private Memories

Sophie McCall argues that “there is always a gap between recorder and storyteller, even when the interlocutors belong to the same community or family, and even when they follow a careful collaborative process.”¹⁴⁷ In consideration of this and since verification with Indigenous sources is key in the attempt to balance Western and Indigenous understandings, developing a verification process which took into account and reflected the cultural and personal dynamics of my collaboration with Archie was an integral part of the research process. While much of the verification of his life narrative took place with close family members after his passing, Archie was provided with copies of all of our interview recordings and transcripts while he was alive. And while it was my hope and intention for Archie to provide comment on his life story, he was not alive to review this draft. It was therefore essential that there be a Stó:lō reader as part of this process, ideally a family member. I am indebted to Archie's great-grandson Zack Joe (*Nwéwt̓n*) who has stepped in and reviewed it, providing invaluable feedback which facilitated us carrying forward the family-based style of research Archie established for us in life. This draft has also benefitted from the careful review and editorial input of my dear friend and Metis scholar Melissa June Gus. Archie's quiet and humble nature had direct impact on the recording of his

¹⁴⁶ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, February 17, 2011.

¹⁴⁷ McCall, *First Person*, 6.

life story and following his passing there were a number of areas of ambiguity surrounding certain aspects of his life experience, and more importantly how he made meaning out of them. Given that I took my lead from what Archie considered important about his life to share, I turned to his family members to try to verify what he did share and also to contextualize his silence. I talked with them to try to better understand in a more nuanced way: What did he deem too personal and private to share? What, if anything, did he deem inappropriate to share with me in particular? What did he deem not useful or relevant to share for the purposes of recording his life history to be published in writing? What did we not discuss due to lack of opportunity as a result of his passing? Interviews I conducted with family after his passing reveal certain aspects of his life experience he did not share even with immediate family members.¹⁴⁸ Particular events and experiences of ambiguity included his residential school experience and the conception of his biological daughter Sonya. Zack Joe (*Nwéwtñ*) told me when we discussed Archie's silences, that his reticence about certain aspects of his life, his residential school experience and the horrors of war that he would have experienced during WWII service overseas, were grounded in his own personal narrative style: "He never really talked about the bad parts. He focused on the positive and used humour to tell his stories." Similarly, step-daughter Caroline Credico indicated that regarding certain aspects of his personal life (such as his early childhood years,

¹⁴⁸ Archie had a very large network of adopted, biological, step and spirit families. I believe it is important to speak in more specific terms about which family I worked with in terms of verification. In my time spent with Archie, my interviews with family, especially verification after his passing, were primarily conducted with those members of his family who lived with him and his life partner Tina at their home in Seabird Island. They included Tina, Tina's daughter Caroline, his step great grandson Zack Joe, his biological granddaughter Rose Charles (adopted as his daughter at 6 months old). I am also thankful for the energy Chief Sid Douglas (*Sru-Ets-Lan-Ough*), son of Archie's adopted sister Edna and Chief of Sumas Dalton Silver (*Lemxyaltexw*) who have contributed to the verification process following Archie's passing.

and previous romantic relationships prior to his forty year partnership with her mother Tina Jack), that “he didn’t talk about it and we didn’t ask about it.”

Re-conceptualizing Community-Based Research (CBR) as Family-Based Research in Archie Charles’ Life History

How researchers undertaking collaborative projects “fit” into the daily life, community and cosmology of those they work with - especially when the learning is cross-cultural - is central to the process of doing engaged and/or prolonged work with a particular community. While of interest to anthropologists since the 1970s¹⁴⁹, the symbiotic nature of collaborative research – the transformational effects and impacts it has on all those involved - has drawn considerable attention in recent scholarship across the disciplines of anthropology, history, Native studies and oral history.

Anthropologist Bruce Miller’s insightful and reflexive article, “The Politics of Ecstatic Research”, draws on examples of his cross-cultural learning experience while working in Coast Salish communities and how it forms what he calls an “experience near anthropology”. He posits that an “experience near anthropology” “may no longer be seen as a fringe activity, but, rather, as increasingly in touch with changes in social science methods that are more responsible to indigenous peoples’ concerns and perspectives.”¹⁵⁰ The benefits of such an approach, Miller suggests, is that it “enables anthropologists to move past the child or ward role and to directly engage in what are seen as locally appropriate forms of learning and adult mores of behavior.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ As discussed in Introduction.

¹⁵⁰ B.G. Miller, “The Politics of Ecstatic Research,” *Extraordinary Anthropology*, eds Bruce Granville Miller, and Jean-Guy Goulet, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 186-207, 187.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 206.

The result, he concludes, is the possibility of research that “helps reveal the beautiful, powerful, and engaging forms of local cultures.”¹⁵² My experience working on this dissertation reflects this form of engagement which Miller describes and provides the possibility for the meaningful engagement and transformation.

Along similar lines, Opsakwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson observes in his recent book *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008) “If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right.”¹⁵³ Wilson’s work builds upon the critical questions Linda Smith raised ten years earlier regarding the methods, history and local cultural impacts of research. Wilson shares a model for research with First Nations based on his own work, centered upon the concept of “relational accountability”: a process that seeks to honour and reflect local Indigenous community learning paradigms. Wilson’s work highlights the experiential nature of deeply engaged and prolonged field research in a First Nations community such as this project, and notes that there is a spiritual dimension to eventual products and outcomes of such work. He suggests that an Indigenous research paradigm is based upon: “the shared aspect of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology [which] is relationality (relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality). The shared aspect of an Indigenous axiology and methodology is accountability to relationships.”¹⁵⁴ Wilson suggests that relational accountability can be put into practice through the choice of research topic, methods of data collection, form of analysis and presentation of

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 135.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 7.

information. In the product-driven paradigm of academics, Wilson's work provides an eloquent reminder of the importance of process, and that the end does not merely justify the means.

Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit by Stó:lō Educator Jo-Ann Archibald (*Q'um Q'um Xiiem*), similarly contributes to an essential and growing body of work written by Indigenous scholars who seek to develop ethical, moral, local and culturally sensitive principles for research practice involving Indigenous peoples and their oral history and traditions. While she says throughout her work that Indigenous oral history is an invaluable teaching tool, she cautions its use when removed from the cultural context from which it derives. It is holism, she concludes, that is essential: "If non-Native teachers and Indigenous teachers are to use and tell Indigenous stories, they must begin a cultural-sensitivity learning process that includes knowledge about storytelling protocol and the nature of these stories."¹⁵⁵

The works of Archibald, Miller, Wilson and others demonstrate the central value and importance of holism and reciprocity in research, particularly within First Nations communities. Far from being "informants" as understood in traditional research, collaborators not only make their own meaning out of their research collaborations, but in doing so function as gatekeepers of knowledge within their own social spheres of family and community. This dissertation picks up on the related themes of holism, relational accountability and research as ecstatic experience proposed by Archibald, Miller and Wilson by focusing on reciprocity and honouring the sustained impacts of research on personal, family and community dynamics. The role Archie ascribed to me was twofold: at once researcher but also granddaughter. Archie clearly saw the difference in roles but did not see them as incompatible – in fact, these overlapping roles deepened

¹⁵⁵ Archibald, *Storywork*, 150.

our communication, as they were mutually beneficial roles that fit within the way in which cultural knowledge is linked to cultural authority. Consequently, this work has the potential to further reveal the flexible and adaptive ways in which Stó:lō families “take in” outsiders and the ways in which Indigenous peoples make sense of their history with newcomers.

As stated in the Introduction, Archie and Tina often used humour to communicate to non-family members the familial role they had given me – on one occasion when they had company coming over to visit, they told me “we’re going to introduce you as “*Telhwha* Charles” and giggled as the person tried to figure out who I was and where I must fit in their family. As such, in the case of recording and analyzing Archie’s *sqwélqwel*, it becomes more relevant in our project to re-conceptualize community-based research as more akin to “family-based research.”

From Dialogue To Polylogue: Inviting Multiple Voices

My engagement in this family-based style of research emerges from and mirrors the many voices who contributed to narrate Archie’s life story (both when he was alive and then, following his passing). This can be understood more succinctly as a shift from the initial primacy of a dialogue (between Archie and me) to the subsequent inclusion of a polylogue¹⁵⁶ (a conversation including multiple voices). As a result, this project has evolved from one of dialogue (Archie and

¹⁵⁶ Both notions of a dialogue and polylogue have been actively discussed in cultural studies since the 1980’s. French feminist and sociologist Julia Kristeva’s 1977 work *Polylogue* inspired the initial debate followed by Michael Bakhtin who was the one to push the idea of polylogue to the foreground with his book *Dialogic Imagination*. This work is in no way the first to engage multiple voices as a form of collaborative authorship. Within the Aboriginal told-to genre specifically, Julie Cruikshank’s *Life Lived Like a Story* and more recently Leslie A Robertson’s *Standing Up with Ga’axsta’las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012) provide inspiration in terms of what my understanding of polyvocality and the value of engaging “many voices” in told-to narratives.

me) with Archie as central narrator, to that of a told-to narrative based on the voices of many. The acceptance of this polyvocality best reflected my intent to resist fitting our collaborative process into a predetermined methodology, in favour of being taught locally over time how to engage in a meaningful way. Polylogue functioned as a means of circumventing the limitations presented by a Western approach to recording Archie's life history and resulted in something grounded more fully and reflecting both our collaboration and Stó:lō cultural norms and protocols related to the transmission of *sqwélqwel*. As the research process with Archie unfolded, it became apparent that the inclusion of multiple voices in the telling of his life story was also not only desirable, but necessary, to circumvent the challenges and limitations posed by the subjectivities of our project. Limitations of time posed by his passing, his show-not-tell narrative style and consideration towards honouring protocols for the transmission of Stó:lō *sqwélqwel* all informed my methodological approach. While PAR provided me with a flexible framework to consider the initial goals and potential benefits of research, it was through drawing upon my previous learning experience interviewing Stó:lō Elders and working directly with Archie that shaped how to engage in a meaningful context-sensitive manner. Over time I reflected on how to record, frame, interpret and verify Archie's story while taking into account our biographies (and how this shaped the content and form of our dialogue). My methodological approach, based on deep engagement while listening to Archie's words, interpreting his actions and contextualizing his silences, also combined the voices of immediate family as well as community members to honour the kind of cultural protocols set out by Sonny McHalsie¹⁵⁷ who cautioned asking a Stó:lō individual,

¹⁵⁷ As discussed on page 20.

especially a leader like Archie, to recount his successes. The result is our form of a family-based style of research based on the inclusion of “many voices”.

CHAPTER TWO: *SQWÉLQWEL*, COMMUNITY, FAMILY, RELIGION AND GROWING UP ON SEABIRD ISLAND



At age two, Archie was adopted by family friend Dave Charles and Dave's wife Mary. They relocated to Seabird Island community. Dave Charles' mother, Josephine Seymore, played a significant role in Archie's young life. On the walls of Archie's kitchen, are photos of family. Here, in his favourite spot to sit and talk in his home, he was surrounded by and a part of, his *sqwélqwel* – true news or genealogy. Archie's adoption by Mary and Dave Charles and relocation to the community of Seabird Island set his life on his own unique course. This photo figured into many of our visits, resting on the wall above where Archie typically sat.

This photo, which Archie cherished, was taken of Archie at age two, circa 1924 in the hop yards located near the town of Agassiz some three miles from Seabird Island. Josephine, along with many other Stó:lō, participated in seasonal wage-labour opportunities throughout the Fraser valley (including hop-yards, canneries, logging) from the turn of the century. The late twenties and early thirties were a particularly challenging time economically for both *Xwelítem* and Stó:lō economies and Archie's childhood experience reveals the adaptive and innovative ways in which Stó:lō individuals and families maintained and shared resources of both natural and cultural variety in order to not only survive, but thrive in tough times.

Archie Charles carried with him the teachings of his adoptive parents, Mary and Dave Charles - particularly their views on education, work and a syncretic religious and cultural belief system and practice - throughout the course of his life. A detailed description of his biological and adoptive genealogy, including the story of his adoption, reveals the complex ways in which members of the greater Stó:lō community, but specifically on Seabird Island, have displayed agency in defining their cultural identity as individuals, family and a community during the last century. An exploration of Seabird Island's history reveals it has continually been a place where its inhabitants have found new ways to reveal the flexibility with which many generations of Stó:lō people have faced the challenges imposed upon them by economic, social, cultural, spiritual, political and familial changes. In order to make meaning out of Archie's successful strategy of leadership based on innovation and tradition, it is important to understand the genesis of his adaptive beliefs. Doing so historicizes the formation of his ethos related to work, education and religion and locates it within Salish historiography.

This chapter presents the story of Archie's early years, including his adoption by Mary and Dave Charles. In doing so, it will also more broadly engage Stó:lō perspectives on kinship, family, community and ceremonialism to frame Archie's early life as narrated by him, as well as via oral recordings with his adopted mother Mary Charles conducted in 1972 and other family members after his passing. I will also combine his *sqwélqwel* shared through oral history interviews with primary sources acquired through consultation with Alice Marwood, the SRRMC genealogist. In addition, I will demonstrate how I addressed my reflections about his silences involving parts of his life story, particularly life events which could be perceived as traumatic or stressful.

Archie Charles, Son of a Logger - Ascending Genealogy, Birth and Biological Family

Archibald “Archie” Charles was born on August 28, 1922. As he recalled in one of our discussions: “...I was from Chilliwack. The Coombs’; Eddie Coombs was my dad.”¹⁵⁸ His father Edward Coombs (see **Figure 2.1**) was from the Skwah Reserve, born January 17, 1884; and his mother was Mary May Sepass of Skowkale reserve, born May 12, 1901, in Sardis, B.C. (adjacent to the city of Chilliwack).

Edward Coombs was married three times – his first wife was Agnes Louis, his second wife was Susan Edwards, and his third and final wife was Mary Sepass.¹⁵⁹ Her father was William (Billy) Sepass, born 1840 in Kettle Falls, Washington. William Sepass passed away March 24 1943 in Skowkale.¹⁶⁰ Mary’s mother was Elizabeth Jane Forest, born 1863 in Nooksack, Washington, and passed away in June, 1944¹⁶¹ in Chilliwack, B.C. Archie only had one photo of his biological mother, Mary Sepass, which we viewed together on one occasion: “I got this picture of my mom by the little church across the border and they called it ‘God’s little Acre’ and it was only as big as this room. I think it’s still there.”¹⁶² Eddie Coombs, who worked as a logger, became sick with tuberculosis, and eventually succumbed to the disease on May 28, 1924.¹⁶³ As stated in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, in “1935 a tuberculosis preventorium was opened on the Coqueleetza site [located in *S’ólh Téméxw*] to deal with the

¹⁵⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Date of month not indicated. Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

¹⁶² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 3 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

¹⁶³ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

“unacceptably high rate[s] of TB in Native communities (30 times the rate of non-Native children).”¹⁶⁴ Both his biological and adoptive fathers died of tuberculosis, as Archie described:

Tuberculosis, it was heavy at that time. Dave Charles passed away – he had tuberculosis too. And when Coqueleetza became a hospital after, he spent quite a bit of time there. There was quite a few from this reserve [Seabird Island] that was there. I don’t know what caused it, whether it was goin’ around or what, but yeah.¹⁶⁵

On his deathbed, Edward Coombs offered a choice of his two young children, Archie, then just under two years of age, and Dorothy, born July 10, 1921¹⁶⁶ and only a year older, to his best friend (in *Halq’eméylem* “*Q’oleq*”¹⁶⁷) and logging buddy Dave Charles of Seabird Island.

As Archie recalls,

Eddie Coombs was my dad. Him and Dave Charles were buddies and Eddie, he put Dorothy and myself and said ‘take your choice’, ‘take ‘em both or one’, and so I always say I was the lucky one. The grandfather on the mother’s side took Dorothy. Sepass is the name.¹⁶⁸

Archie described how he and Dorothy did not come to realize that they were biological siblings until they were teenagers: “I was adopted by the Charles family here in Seabird when I was about two years old and I had a sister I didn’t know until I was 16 or something, I was out of school anyways.”¹⁶⁹

Dorothy Coombs married Carl Leon of the Katsie community and lived there throughout her life. In 2008, I had an opportunity to speak with Dorothy to discuss her relationship with

¹⁶⁴ Jody R. Woods, “Coqueleetza: Legacies of Land Use”, In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 74-75, 74.

¹⁶⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁶⁶ Dorothy Leon, interview with Meagan Gough, August 1, 2008.

¹⁶⁷ Carlson, “Collective Identity”, 27.

¹⁶⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Archie at her home in Katsie prior to her passing. Dorothy, then frail due to illness, still had an effervescent and warm personality, as well as sharing Archie's good sense of humour. The physical similarity between Dorothy and Archie was striking. (see **Figure 2.2**) She grew up in Chilliwack¹⁷⁰ and described how, until she was age 15, she was unaware that her adoptive parents, Billy Sepass and Elizabeth Sepass (née Forest)¹⁷¹ were not her biological parents. Sitting in her living room accompanied by family she recalled to me in her soft voice:

I sure had nice grandparents to take me in though.... How they really kept that a secret all that time! We would go to visit really, the mother and the daughter and my mother would say: 'Well, get ready, we'll go visit your sister. Your sister and your aunt.' So I never knew. But then my mother would give me... you know, [Dorothy pauses] Excuse me. She'd just grab me and hug me, nothing come out. Little I knew, it was my mother.¹⁷²

She then described the circumstances of learning she was adopted:

Right 'till 15 years old that I finally met my brother, Archie. Could you imagine? And my real parents, my mother and dad said, 'you better sit there Dorothy, you too Archie, I have something to tell you that you don't know, and you'd better sit.' She says 'that's your brother: Archie Charles.' And I was really puzzled. 'That's your brother, Archie Charles, and that's your parents. You were adopted out, and so was he.' That blew us over, I tell you."¹⁷³

Dorothy described how she and Archie were together when they received the news: "Yeah, we were walking down the road to go to a ball game. He says, 'While you're waiting here, you best as well go to the ball game.' So that's exactly what we did. My mother thought, 'We'd better tell them now, or otherwise they'd fall in love.'¹⁷⁴ She remarked that her feelings about her

¹⁷⁰ Dorothy Leon, interview with Meagan Gough, August 1, 2008.

¹⁷¹ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

¹⁷² Dorothy Leon, interview with Meagan Gough, August 1, 2008.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

adoption changed over time: “It bothered me for a while, you know I wondered: why were we given away, you know? But I did find out that Dad Eddie Coombs had just the two years to live [pauses to reflect] no months, it was months. A short time to live.”¹⁷⁵

Dorothy and Archie went their separate paths at that time. Although living only a short distance from one another for most of their adult lives, it was only when Dorothy turned 70 years old that the siblings reunited. As Dorothy reflected, “We just went different ways. I never seen him after that”, noting that the reunion that sparked their renewed involvement in each other’s lives was a surprise organized by her family. “It was my birthday, and they gave me a surprise party at my son’s place. I’ll never, ever, forget that. We could’ve passed on you know, one of us, before we found out, before one of us could’ve found out, eh?”¹⁷⁶ From that point on, they maintained regular contact until her passing in 2009. When we discussed Dorothy in a 2009 interview I commented that, despite being sick when I had met her, she still had a sparkling personality and a good spirit, to which Archie responded: “Oh yeah... right to the last day... yeah, she would even throw in a joke once and a while.”¹⁷⁷ Mary Sepass remarried after the passing of Eddie Coombs and had three additional children with Alfred Gabriel of Kwantlen. Barb Gabriel, Helen Gabriel and Joe Gabriel are Archie’s half siblings.¹⁷⁸ (See **Appendix D**) Archie never explained in our interviews his thoughts as to why Mary Sepass gave up him and Dorothy for adoption. As noted in Stephanie Danyluk’s recent Master’s research exploring Stó:lō

¹⁷⁵ Dorothy Leon, interview with Meagan Gough, August 1, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study March 11, 1997.

kinship systems and the practice of adoption, the private nature of Archie and Dorothy's adoption is not uncommon within Stó:lō culture:

Expressions of Stó:lō families take many forms, connected by their expansive understanding of kinship obligations. This expansive understanding is exemplified in the common practice of taking in children. In addition to distinguishing their approach from those imposed on Indigenous communities through colonial policies and practices, taking in children is much more private, often based on the private knowledge of culture and tradition held within extended families. As scholarship on the Coast Salish has affirmed, holding important private knowledge within the extended family remains an important way to maintain status within Coast Salish communities.¹⁷⁹

When Archie was adopted in 1924 by Dave and Mary Charles, (see **Figure 2.3**) he relocated to Seabird Island. Mary Charles (née Pettis) - "*Lal.mut*" or "*Lalme*" - was born December 16, 1893. Archie recalls she was a member of the *Nlaka'pamux*¹⁸⁰ First Nation from Spuzzum. Archie stated he never met Mary Charles' biological mother¹⁸¹, listed as Margaret James.¹⁸² Her ancestral name was "*St'qyom*" or *St'qaiom*", and while ethnographic records

¹⁷⁹ Stephanie Danyluk, "'We Let Them Be Our Extended Family': Detangling Stó:lō Families from the Colonial Past," MA Thesis: University of Saskatchewan, 2012, 67. See also Bruce Granville Miller, "Folk Law and Contemporary Coast Salish Tribal Code," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 19:3 (1995), 141-164 and Keith Thor Carlson, "Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization: Governance and Authority in a Coast Salish Community," *Native Studies Review* 19, no 2 (2010), 1-42.

¹⁸⁰ James Teit, anthropologist and student of Franz Boas was the first to write the history of the *Nlaka'pamux* peoples (then referred to as "Thompson" peoples). Teit recorded over fifty *Nlaka'pamux* narratives in 1898 which were published in *The Mythology of the Thompson Indians*. The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, vol. 8, pt.2. American Museum of Natural History Memoir 12. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1912.

¹⁸¹ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 11, 1997; Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁸² Marian Smith, Field notes, Book #4, page 8 in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

simply indicate she died when Mary Charles was a child,¹⁸³ Mary states in a 1972 interview that her mother passed when she was twelve years old.¹⁸⁴ Mary Charles' father was George Pettis "*Piphamuxun*".¹⁸⁵ His father's mother was *Lalemut* from Boston Bar *Stqyom*.¹⁸⁶ Her father's father was *Piphamuxum* from Lillooet.¹⁸⁷ George Pettis remarried, to Sarah Angela Pettis (née Yowala), who was from Spuzzum,¹⁸⁸ the first cousin of first wife Margaret James.¹⁸⁹ This was the step-mother that Mary knew growing up. Sarah Yowala's father was Paul Yowala, who died in 1942. Paul Yowala was a man of great significance in the history of the Fraser Canyon in the late nineteenth century, and, as will be shown below, subsequently in Archie's life.

Ethnologist Andrea Laforet's innovative told-to narrative collaboration with *Nlaka'pamux* (Thompson) community members includes discussion of the Yowala family: "In 1858 there was a short war in the Fraser Canyon, and Spuzzum, the southernmost village of the *Nlaka'pamux* people was in the middle of it. Three men involved in the war became noted as influential people in Spuzzum in later years...[one of them being] Paul Yowala who was a young

¹⁸³ Marian Smith, Field notes, Book #4, page 8, in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

¹⁸⁴ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972. The interviewer does not state his name in the recording. However, Keith Carlson who provided me with the interview recording, identifies the interviewer is Roy Point and that the interview is part of Skowkale History Project.

¹⁸⁵ Marian Smith, Field notes, 1945, Book #4, page 8, in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

¹⁸⁶ Marian Smith, Field notes 1945, Book #4, page 9, in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

¹⁸⁷ Marian Smith, Field notes 1945, Book #4, page 9, in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

¹⁸⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 11, 1997.

¹⁸⁹ Marian Smith, Field notes, Book #4, page 8, in Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, handwritten.

man at the time of the war.”¹⁹⁰ Mary Charles recounts Paul Yowala’s stories of the Canyon war as told to her:

That old man was a boy of 12 when the white people came through. The first boat, the first bunch that landed in Yale. He was about 12 years old. Yeah, that old Yowala. He was about 12, he said, and when the white people burned their camp he packed his little sister up to the mountain. He was about 12 or 13 he said. He doesn’t know his age then, but he says: ‘but I already had used my man language,’ he says. ‘You know that you’re a man when you change your voice.’¹⁹¹

Paul Yowala would play a significant role in Archie’s life, in that Archie would later go on to be covered with Paul Yowala’s ancestral name, “*Nwéwtm*.”¹⁹² Archie’s naming ceremony will be described in further detail in Chapter Three.

Anthropology graduate student Eleanor Leacock observed in her participation in the Columbia University field school in Seabird Island in 1945, that the *Nlaka’pamux* (Thompson) and Stó:lō are “closely interrelated through marriage, since the Salish are exogamous, and the ties thus created are as important as the linguistic and cultural ties.”¹⁹³ Laforet further adds to a discussion of the nature of kinship connections between Stó:lō and *Nlaka’pamux* peoples: “Because both societies had a bilateral system of descent, a married couple could, in principle, make a claim on resources belonging to parents and grandparents of both spouses.”¹⁹⁴ As a result, there were a number of *Nlaka’pamux* families like Mary Charles’ (née Pettis) family who, at the turn of the century, negotiated membership in both communities. These negotiated inter-

¹⁹⁰ Andrea Laforet, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 23.

¹⁹¹ Mary Charles, interview with Oliver Wells, October 5, 1967, 668.

¹⁹² Also spelled “*Nwéwtm*.”

¹⁹³ Eleanor. B. Leacock, “The Seabird Community.” In *Indians of the Urban Northwest*, ed. Marian Smith Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology 36. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 185-194, 192.

¹⁹⁴ Laforet, *Spuzzum*, 137-138.

tribal relationships continue to this day, and are at the core of contemporary overlapping claims to Aboriginal Rights and Title being negotiated in the Canyon. However as Laforet describes,

Before the gold rush, the *Nlaka'pamux* relationship with the Halkomelem-speaking peoples of the Fraser River was the primary interregional relationship. The prevailing trend was for women to marry downriver, taking things such as *Nlaka'pamux* language, basketry skills, techniques for fish preparation and other kinship connections with them.¹⁹⁵

Dave Charles was born February 24, 1902.¹⁹⁶ He was from the Stó:lō community of Chehalis.¹⁹⁷ He carried his father's name, "*Siemteluk*".¹⁹⁸ His father was Charlie Charles "*Siemteluk*"¹⁹⁹ from Duncan, B.C.,²⁰⁰ on Vancouver Island. David Charles's mother, Josephine (née Tommy) Seymour "*Memxxa*"²⁰¹ (alternately spelled "*Mamca*", or "*Mem'xa*")²⁰², who Archie referred to as "Granny",²⁰³ was from Skookumchuck²⁰⁴ and born in 1871.²⁰⁵ Josephine Seymour's mother, Catherine, was ("*Mamia:a.*") Archie knew her, remarking how she "still had her eyesight, must have been about 110."²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 137.

¹⁹⁶ 1949 Band List, Seabird Island #038.

¹⁹⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

¹⁹⁸ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

²⁰¹ Also spelled "*Mamca*", or "*Mem'xa*" Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994; Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

²⁰² Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

²⁰³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

²⁰⁴ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994, Summary Notes, handwritten.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

Josephine Seymour played a central role in Mary Charles' and Archie's life. (see **Figure 2.4**) The centrality of in-laws in the family structure is described in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*: "In-law relations were of the utmost importance, the most significant being the ones forged between a husband and wife's parents – a relationship called *skw'élwélh* (or "co-parent-in-laws", which had no meaningful equivalent in mainstream *Xwelítem* society)."²⁰⁷ Mary describes how "*Memca*" played an important role in her learning: "I got married and learned everything from my mother-in-law. Up country, it was the men who cleaned fish... the women sat and made baskets. I didn't know how to clean fish. After I got married, I had to learn."²⁰⁸ Josephine's father's mother's name was *Siemtlot* and her mother's sister's name was *Klep'a*²⁰⁹, which is her Douglas name from Chehalis.²¹⁰ Josephine Seymour had three husbands: the first was Baptiste Pemberton²¹¹, the second was Charlie Charles (Dave's father) and the third was Noel Seymour.²¹² Noel Seymour fought in WWI.²¹³ Dave Charles had a sister, Theresa Charles. She carried the female version of her father's name "*Siemtelot*." She married twice - her first husband was Stanley Michelle from Chehalis. They had two children, Mary-Lou and Moody Michelle. Moody Michelle was raised by Dave and Mary Charles as a son.²¹⁴ Theresa Michelle

²⁰⁷ Carlson, "Collective Identity", 27.

²⁰⁸ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

²⁰⁹ Unsure if *Klep'a* is a name. Marian Smith, Field notes 1945, Book #4, page 12 in Summary Notes, page 3 of 3, handwritten.

²¹⁰ Marian Smith, Field notes 1945, Book #4, page 12 in Summary Notes, page 3 of 3, handwritten.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

²¹³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 10, 2008 (unrecorded).

²¹⁴ Marian Smith, Field notes Book 4, page 13, Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

(née Charles) married again, to Fraser Kelly, who was a Douglas.²¹⁵ As noted by anthropologist Marian Smith in her field notes, Josephine Seymour lived with Theresa Kelly between Chilliwack and Abbotsford at Kilgard.²¹⁶

Including Archie, Dave and Mary Charles adopted a total of eight children:²¹⁷ “Charlie Charles, who Archie recalls ‘died very young’,²¹⁸ Moody Michelle, Henry Charles, and Edna Julian, who married Albert Douglas. Rose “Rosey” Point (née Pettis) was from Seabird Island, and Shirley Ned (née Pettis) also carries the name *Siemtelot*, the female version of Dave Charles’s name. Carine Pettis and William “Willy” Pettis were the children of Joseph and Theresa Pettis.²¹⁹ Archie and Henry were the only two adopted children who were given the Charles name.²²⁰ (See **Appendix E**)

What is interesting in terms of what it reveals about both the interconnectedness between Stó:lō families and the flexibility by which family members took care of one another, is the multiplicity of ways in which Archie’s biological and adoptive parents were connected. While adoptive father Dave Charles and biological father Eddie Coombs were logging buddies, his

²¹⁵ Marian Smith, Field notes Book 4, page 13, Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994; states Fraser Kelly from “Douglas somewhere.”

²¹⁶ Marian Smith, Field notes Book 4, pp. 4-5, Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

²¹⁷ Note that in the 1997 TUS Interview, Archie states they adopted 5 children, not 8.

²¹⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 2009; Archie Charles, interview, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

²¹⁹ Marian Smith, Field notes Book 4, page 9, Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

²²⁰ Caroline Credico, phone interview with Meagan Gough, September 19, 2013.

adoptive mother Mary Charles' grandmother was Agnes Louis, Eddie Coombs' first wife. This made his adoptive mother his aunt.

In my conversations with Archie about his early childhood and adoption, he provided little to no indication of his personal feelings relating to having been adopted. While he would recount his genealogy and his fond memories of his adoptive parents as well as his personal views of adoption in general, there remained a significant silence in his narrative. Upon reflection, I have come to believe that this silence existed in part because I did not push the issue or ask him directly to speak to how he felt. I felt this was somehow “prying” and therefore beyond the scope of my role as both an ethnohistorian and my privilege as someone Archie had come to consider an adopted member of his family. Rather, as I came to realize over time, Archie preferred in lieu of elaborate descriptions of his feelings, to relate the facts and positive outcomes of stressful experiences. In order to better understand the context for this silence, following his passing, I asked his close family members if he ever gave any indication of his feelings. They responded that he spoke very little on his feelings about his adoption, instead focusing on its impact: the gratitude he felt growing up in the adoptive household that he did. As becomes apparent throughout Archie's account of his life events, one of his strategies for coping with traumatic and stressful memories was to focus on the positive lessons and teachings which he extrapolated from these experiences.

However, while Archie was silent about these aspects of his family history, his adoptive mother Mary was less so. In an interview decades earlier, Mary Charles described what she understood to be Archie's feelings relating to his adoption:

That's where Archie comes from... I always tell him his relations too, you know now. He says 'I can't get on to it now. If they had come to see me when I was small, I would

remember them' but they never came to see him when he was growing.' You miss your relations...Dorothy is Archie's full sister.²²¹

Archie explained to me how in the past, informal adoption or "*Texwmela:m*" (in *Halq'eméylem* "to adopt or raise someone else's child"), frequently took place in Stó:lō culture. People adopted informally without government sanction and that this was important because it kept people close to their family rather than having children sent off to be raised by adoptive parents far away. When I asked him about whether adoption was a typical Stó:lō cultural practice or more a reflection of the family he grew up in he responded:

No, there's lots of adoption. You didn't have to go through law or anything like that before... We didn't like to see them [children] sent away. Some of them were sent a long ways away and then they come[back] looking for their homes. That was their [ancestors] method. And I think it was a good way too instead of putting them on the street to fend for themselves like some I see in Vancouver, Holy Moly. Young kids, hey? It should be like that with every family but the law is the law I guess.²²²

The impact of *Xwelítem* laws on the Stó:lō family structure, particularly the institutionalization and government regulation of adoption, is described in the work *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*. In this work with Susan Fournier, Stó:lō activist and author Ernie Crey describes the genesis of removing Aboriginal children from their families from early contact to the residential schools, to the more recent "Sixties Scoop" of Indigenous children from across Canada. Crey's own testimony about his early experience in residential school reveals the devastating and sustained impacts of assimilationist policies that stripped Stó:lō parents of their authority, first in the residential schools and then in the administration of government child care

²²¹ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

²²² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

policies. He concludes that this allowed provincial social workers to exercise “the jurisdiction given to them by the federal government to go into Indian homes on and off reserve and make judgments about what constituted proper care, according to non-native, middle-class values...”²²³

The impacts of colonial policy related to family services – the forcible removal and adoption, relocation of children and what was envisioned as “child protection” - will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three. Archie’s adoption shaped him in significant ways. Not only in terms of his ethos in relation to work, education and religion informed by the teachings of his adoptive parents, but in his own future role as an adoptive father. He makes explicit the connection between his adoption and how he and partner Tina Jack went on to adopt 18 children, stepchildren and foster children later in life.²²⁴ This part of Archie’s *sqwélqwel* - his descending genealogy - will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Archie’s adopted home community of *Sq’ewqéyl* (Seabird Island) has a multi-layered cultural and social history that demonstrates the complex intersection between Stó:lō cultural, social and economic life and colonial policy. Its history provides an example of the sustained impact the colonial administration has had on the lives of Stó:lō and neighbouring First Nations. The history of Seabird Island also illuminates the highly adaptive and dynamic ways that this community have sought to differentiate itself and how this agency resulted in a kind of cultural, political and social mosaic which influenced Archie’s life greatly.

²²³ Ernie Crey and Susan Fournier, *Stolen from our Embrace: the Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Press, 1998), 30.

²²⁴ Archie stated in his interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997 that he and partner Tina Jack raised 14 children. In our discussions he recounted adopted 18 children including step, foster and inter-family adoptions. In his July 1, 2010 interview with scholar Stephanie Danyluk, Archie recalled the number of children at 18 (Danyluk, “We Let Them Be”, 75).

The Seabird Island Reserve is located in Southwestern B.C., near the town of Agassiz, B.C. Cut in half by highway 7, it is bordered by mountains and contains flat and arable farmland. Seabird Island's *Halq'eméylem* name, *Sq'éwqel*²²⁵, translates as "Turn in the River"; while "[t]he English designation of Seabird Island is derived from the June 1858 grounding of the transport paddle-wheeler *Sea Bird*, on an island bar in the Fraser River, across from *Sq'éwqel*."²²⁶ It is noted that "At the beginning of the contact era, *Sqewqéyl* was severely depopulated as a result of smallpox. In 1878, the colonial government established *Sqewqéyl* as an 'agricultural reserve' in an effort to redirect *Stó:lō* economic and social activities away from fishing and toward farming. As part of this process, families from a number of upriver communities (mostly in the Fraser Canyon) resettled the reserve."²²⁷ In June of 1879, Gilbert M. Sproat (19 April 1834 – 4 June 1913), an Indian Reserve Commissioner, consulted with First Nations people in the region. Following this consultation, Sproat wrote that the island reserve was to be set aside for those who resided in the Fraser Canyon and therefore had little access to agricultural lands, that is to say, "[f]or all the Indians between Cheam and Spuzzum - namely Popkum, Skawtits, Ohamil, Ska-wah-look, Hope, Union Bar, and Yale Indians."²²⁸ Anthropologist Eleanor Leacock noted that in addition to these *Stó:lō* bands which came to exercise formal political control over Seabird, individual families and individuals from farther

²²⁵ Also spelled "*Sqewqéyl*".

²²⁶ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/our-people> (download date November 12, 2012).

²²⁷ Dave M. Schaepe, "Village Arrangements and Settlement Patterns." In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 36-39, 38.

²²⁸ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, "Minutes of Decision and sketches- Circa May 1878 to January 1880" [Reg. No. 7470-244D] Volume 18: 222.

upriver (*Nlaka'pamux* people) also migrated to Seabird to take up farming. These Thompson people became integrated into the Stó:lō community. In her words, “The fact that Seabird Reserve ‘was never a band but it is all mixed up’ must be considered. The people inhabiting the Island belong to at least two linguistic and cultural groups, the branch of Coast Salish known locally as ‘Stalo,’ which appears to be the older in the area, and the Thompson or Interior Salish with ties up-river.”²²⁹ Anthropologist Hilary Blair’s research further illuminates how the allocation of Seabird Island Reserve was fraught with tension among the amalgamated bands:

The unusually complicated history reveals an inconsistent administration by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), characterized by policy reversals, and that sometimes the department acted in contravention of its own mandates. This exacerbated the Aboriginal inter-band dispute which had been set in motion by pressure from non-Aboriginal neighbours who wished to settle on Seabird Island.²³⁰

Travel and exchange between communities has been extensive both pre- and post-contact, creating an interplay between familial, cultural, economic, social, spiritual and political identities over time. Mary Charles’ oral history adds depth to the historical record regarding the seasonal movement of peoples in the region to Seabird Island: “My dad came in 1901. Because this was good farming country...Dad started making a farm here. He cleared about sixty acres under cultivation before he quit.”²³¹ Sproat set aside the reserve lands after travelling with Yale Chief *Liquitim* who identified Seabird Island as the location for a reserve with the intent of providing adequate farming land to the peoples living throughout the Canyon region. For, Sproat stated, “the real arable land in the neighbourhood is at Seabird Island between Skawtits and

²²⁹ Leacock, “The Seabird Community”, 192.

²³⁰ Hilary Blair, *Settling Seabird Island: Land, Resources and Ownership on a British Columbia Indian Reserve*, (MA Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1999), 2.

²³¹ Mary Charles, interview with Oliver Wells, October 5, 1967, 624-625.

Popkum.”²³² While families came from upriver down to settle in Seabird Island in order to become farmers, that does not mean that fishing did not remain a key activity and pre-occupation for many Stó:lō living at Seabird²³³ who have seasonally accessed, used and occupied dry rack fishing sites upriver in the Fraser Canyon since time immemorial. Stó:lō Canyon fishermen, or “dry rackers”, many such as Archie’s family who currently live on the Seabird Island Reserve, have a collective interest in maintaining their ability to access this resource, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six. Mary Charles’ oral history provides insight into the natural resources available to the inhabitants of Seabird Island that enticed them at the turn of the century:

They came here to smoke their fish in the fall, from everywhere... Plus, there’s a slough over there was kind of more like a river...I remember when I first come here, Dad married again and my step-mother got a couple of sturgeon right from the slough here...She caught it in a net.²³⁴

As Hilary Blair suggests, both wage-labour and subsistence economic opportunities in the region served to supplement (or initially replace) agricultural opportunities on Seabird Island:

While some readily embraced the change to farming, others, to the department’s chagrin, initially ignored its desire to see them anchored permanently on farms, and combined farming with both traditional and non-traditional seasonal activities, such as fishing, hop-picking and wage labour for lumber companies.²³⁵

Archie recollected hunting and trapping as a child growing up on Seabird Island:

²³² Sproat, “Minutes of Decision Volume 18”, 277.

²³³ Other Stó:lō fishing families living at Seabird Island include (among others) the Pettis, McIntyre, Seymour, Peters, and Andrews families.

²³⁴ Mary Charles, interview with Oliver Wells, October 5, 1967, 629.

²³⁵ Blair, “Settling Seabird”, 98.

In my generation we were taught at a very young age to hunt and trap. In our walks through the woods we were taught to observe where animals had their homes and that [sic] where you set your trap or snares. We done most of our hunting on reserve it's a large reserve, 5000 acres. A lot of water ways for trapping.²³⁶

He described some of the plentiful resources available to community members in his youth: "We trapped for "mink, otter, beaver, racoon, muskrat, weasel, squirrels. To trap marten, lynx, rabbit, you had to climb the mountains. [The] colder the winter, the pelts are better and a better price."²³⁷ His recollections of this era of his childhood illustrate the resourcefulness and perseverance families in Seabird Island had to utilize to make the land provide for hunting, trapping and gardening. "Well, go back to '29, '28 and '29, it was bad, what they called the 'hungry '30s'. You had to grow stuff to keep going..."²³⁸ He recalled a game taught to him and other children by his parents to engage them in making use of whatever resources were available to them: "We were also tested in those days, if our parents wished for a change of diet they gave us one shell to get something for supper. If you missed there was no supper."²³⁹

In the challenging Depression-era years of Archie's youth, his family and the Seabird Island community managed to successfully combine participation in wage labour economic opportunities with sustenance activities. Historian John Lutz refers to this mixed-mode production system apparent in Northwest Coast Aboriginal communities such as Seabird Island as a "moditional economy,"²⁴⁰ which he defines as one that is "[b]ased on a combination of traditional modes of reproduction and production (for subsistence, prestige goods, and exchange

²³⁶ Archie Charles, handwritten statement TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Archie Charles interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

²³⁹ Archie Charles, handwritten statement TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

²⁴⁰ John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 23.

– trade was always part of the pre-European economy) with new modes of production for exchange in a capitalist market.”²⁴¹ Lutz points out that these hybrid Aboriginal economies “have often been dismissed as transitional on the road to a modern, fully capitalist economy. In fact, they are as resilient and as long lived as capitalism.”²⁴²

Historian Hilary Blair’s conclusion supports Lutz’s thesis, as does the testimony of Archie and Mary Charles in relation to community members’ efforts to be active agents in the settling and development of their community in the face of colonial intervention. She stresses that “[o]n Seabird Island both the complexity of individual involvement and the making and unmaking of group alliances does not allow for simple or unambiguous conclusions about victimization or agency.”²⁴³

The blended linguistic and cultural practices of the Charles’ home similarly challenge singular understandings of the colonial influence of Christianity and English. The married home of Mary and Dave Charles was multilingual; English, Douglas (*Státimcets*), Thompson (*Nlaka’pamuxtsn*) and Stó:lō (*Halq’eméylem*) were all spoken to varying degrees. In a recollection that challenges many current assumptions about residential schools and language oppression (and is at odds with the experience of Archie and others a generation later), Mary describes her early years in school and how it was permissible at that time for children to talk in their Native language. She recalls how she knew no English when she entered St Mary’s mission:

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid

²⁴³ Blair, “Settling Seabird”, 8.

When I was about nine years old, I didn't know a word of English. Didn't even know my Christian name... After I grew up a little, after I was about 12 I guess, I learned the Stó:lō language [*Halq'eméylem*]. We learned it in school. Some people say teachers they made you - they don't want you to talk Indian, but it's not true. We learned our prayers in Indian. I knew my prayers in Thompson. I knew my prayers in Stalo [sic], and every day there was a different language spoken at Mass. We had Mass every day. And we had Mass - like one day it was the Stó:lō language was said, in Indian. The prayers were all Indian. Then the next day it was the Douglas [Lilloet] language. The next day it was Thompson language. Kept going like that until about 1907, I think, when we spoke nothing but English.²⁴⁴

Mary further states that "Father Giroux learned our language and Father Roy talked Thompson and Douglas language. The best priest who talked Douglas was Father Palmer."²⁴⁵

During another interview with Mary, interviewer Roy Point, who is Stó:lō, expresses his belief that "white people killed our language." To which Mary Charles responds:

It's our own fault! With me it was the same. I know I went to school all year, I had holidays three weeks, that's all. I could have forgotten my language! But we spoke Indian in school, outside of the school at recess, when we were outside playing outside on the grounds, we spoke our language. There were girls who spoke Douglas [Lilloet], Stó:lō... Before I left school I could understand the Douglas language good... My husband, Dave, used to say his confession prayers in Indian. He would say his prayers in English and his sins in Indian! [laughs].²⁴⁶

Mary Charles' experience in residential school, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three, serves in many ways as a contrast to both her son's experience and the largely dark and negative narrative about residential schools that have come to prominence over the past two decades. Her voice illustrates the diversity of generational and personal experiences within the IRS system. Roy Point also states he is a residential school survivor himself, and discusses with Mary rules against speaking his language of origin at IRS – noting that there were rules

²⁴⁴ Mary Charles, interview with Oliver Wells, October 5, 1967, 625-626.

²⁴⁵ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point February 25, 1972.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

against talking Indian at Sechelt IRS and at Kamloops IRS, but that “kids talked among themselves.”²⁴⁷ Mary responds by explaining that “I never heard of anyone getting strapped at my school for talking Indian. I got strapped for other things, but I deserved every strapping I got, I know I did!”²⁴⁸ For Mary, despite encouraging the learning opportunity presented at St Mary’s IRS, her father cautioned her on losing her cultural identity:

When I first left the school I wanted to talk English... My Dad one day, he said: ‘You always talk Indian to me. Look at your hand, see it’s brown? ...It will never turn white no matter how much English you speak! Don’t be ashamed of your language... Be proud of your language!’ That’s what my father taught me. So when we were home...if any of us spoke English at the table, he told us, ‘you’re not a white man, you talk your language at home. When you’re out, you can talk English.’²⁴⁹

She further describes her view of the role the Church played in eradicating Native language: “A lot of people blame the missionaries for taking the language away. But if it wasn’t for the missionaries, I wouldn’t be talkin’ English. Because the Provincial Government and Federal Government ignored us, they wouldn’t give us no schooling!”²⁵⁰ She provides a descriptive account of the impact of not learning English, as evidenced by the challenges a friend of hers from Seabird Island encounters who speaks only *Halq’eméylem*. Her story highlights her belief in the value of acquiring language as a tool provided by formal Western education:

Old Mary Peters over there she never went to school. But she’s good at Indian words. She never went to school...If she goes somewhere she has to have an interpreter... You know how white people got those big words now? She doesn’t understand that! ...We went to the museum, her and I. I interpret for her. It’s too bad you know.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

She goes on to explain how she feels about criticism of the Church: “When I hear people talking against them, it hurts me; it really hurts me! If it wasn’t for them... We’d still be greenhorns!”²⁵² Mary’s discussion here of IRS, missionaries, religion and spirituality goes a long way toward explaining the genesis of Archie’s syncretic approach to Catholicism and spirituality. While his was distinct from his mother’s early school experience, he held in common with his mother the agency to select and interpret from familial, cultural and religious teachings, thereby developing a personally significant and meaningful spiritual practice and ethos. How Mary’s views comingled with Archie’s will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Roman Catholicism on Seabird Island

On Seabird Island, since the creation of the reserve in 1879, Stó:lō spiritual practice both clashed and comingled with Roman Catholicism. Many Stó:lō people, including Mary and Dave Charles, formed a syncretic religious practice based on Christian and Stó:lō spiritual teachings, displaying agency in light of missionization and challenging basic assumptions of accommodation and resistance. As noted in writings by Father Leo Casey OMI in 1978:

The Catholic people of Seabird Island have always considered religious education to be an integral part of their children’s education. For this reason, the band allots a sum annually to ensure that this will continue. Seabird is the only Reserve that we know of, which provides this service.²⁵³

Father Casey also observes that “of particular historical interest is the fact that the first Catholic Church on Seabird Island was built before non-Native Catholics in Agassiz had their

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Father Leo Casey, OMI, “A History of the Catholic Church on Seabird Island.” *Stó:lō Nation News*. December 1978, # 39 (no page number listed).

own Church.”²⁵⁴ While the first Seabird Island community church was built in the 1880s,²⁵⁵ the second was built in 1961, with the actual construction of the church undertaken by community members.²⁵⁶ History MA student Robyn Moore interviewed Archie Charles about his involvement in the building of the church at Seabird Island for her work *The Activity of Kinship on Seabird Island and Shxwohamil: A History of Two Roman Catholic Stó:lō Churches* (2009). In her work, she relates that Archie shared with her “a funny anecdote that the steeple was struck by lightning one night as they were finishing the church. The church was fine and Charles jokes that ‘maybe they had built it backwards!’”²⁵⁷ (See Figure 2.5)

While working in 1961 to build the new Roman Catholic Church of Immaculate Conception at Seabird Island, Dave Charles was in charge of the planning and construction, while Arthur Joe Peters split the shakes.²⁵⁸ Both Mary and Archie Charles provided oral testimony about this effort: Mary reflects that Archie and Joey were the only men who did the labour on the Church.²⁵⁹ Archie described his experience building the church and in addition to his description of events, the vernacular he chooses to describe God/Creator provides insight into his fluid spiritual beliefs:

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Seabird Island Historic Timeline: <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date November 12, 2012).

²⁵⁶ Father Leo Casey, OMI, *Stó:lō Nation News*, December 1978, # 39.

²⁵⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Megan Harvey, Andre Boiselle, and Robyn Moore, May 18, 2009 in Moore, “*The Activity of Kinship on Seabird Island and Shxwohamil: A History of Two Roman Catholic Stó:lō Churches*.” Unpublished Ethnohistory Field paper, 2009, 17.

²⁵⁸ Father Leo Casey, O.M.I., “History of Immaculate Conception Church, Seabird Island and Our Lady of Fatima Church, Chehalis Reserve,” *Stó:lō Nation News*, 10 November 1982, 4.

²⁵⁹ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

We planned the main part and then the head carpenter took over. It's still standing. Built 1961 I think. I was bawling out that guy upstairs, soon as we finished the church we put the cross on and that night there was a thunderstorm that knocked the cross off. In His own house! There must be a message there somewhere.²⁶⁰

Moore makes a further observation of the dynamics involved in the construction of the Church, suggesting that it also served as a means of enacting resistance to Government encroachment:

Interestingly, the construction of the new church occurred at the same time as 'pressures of outside forces' in the form of the government, who was again attempting to take the land away from the Aborigines at Seabird Island. Charles tells that the government wanted to take the land in 1961 because the community was apparently not using the land. He suggests that the re-building of the church in the same year was an act of resistance and a way of using the land [whereby], the enacting of kinship was realized through the rebuilding of the church.²⁶¹

Mary Charles was an active lay leader and member of the Stó:lō Roman Catholic community. Her efforts are celebrated by Father Leo Casey in his writings: "When the Oblate Fathers left St. Mary's Student residence in 1974, the Seabird Church Committee, presided over by Mary Charles, purchased a mobile home for the pastor Father Leo Casey, OMI. It was ready for occupancy June 16, 1974."²⁶² Writings by Father Casey further state that "(t)he Oblates were always well cared for by the people of Seabird."²⁶³ Dave Charles was once asked to go to the Church in Agassiz. He replied: "Why I go to Agassiz, Father O' Brien is my Priest!"²⁶⁴

Writings such as this reveal the range of syncretism in Stó:lō society in the mid-twentieth century. People like Dave and Mary Charles were devout Catholics and still advocates of

²⁶⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

²⁶¹ Moore, "Activity of Kinship", 18.

²⁶² Father Leo Casey, OMI, *Stó:lō Nation News*, # 39.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

traditional Stó:lō cultural and spiritual practices, such as winter dancing, potlatching and feasting.

Stó:lō Ceremonialism in the Twentieth Century: Changes in Form, Function and Place

Stó:lō ceremonial practices are very diverse and there have always been many occasions for ceremony, resulting in multiple expressive forms of such within the Stó:lō community. Winter dancing, feasts, burnings, potlatches, funerals, social celebrations, the Shaker Church and more recently, pan-Indian ceremonial forms have all evoked participation in cultural expression by the Stó:lō community. Anthropologist Wayne Suttles notes that the Salish language distinguishes between two main types of ceremonial gatherings: the “feast” and the potlatch. Feasts were generally smaller in size than potlatches, with guests comprised of immediate or adjacent family members. Feasts are thought to have functioned in purpose for redistributing “sudden oversupply of food...marking some life crisis, or, if in winter, to provide an occasion for spirit dancing.”²⁶⁵ Spirit dancing functioned as the expression of participation in a vision quest within which the dancer encountered an animal, either real or mythical, that conferred on the vision seeker a particular skill.²⁶⁶ From there, “[e]ach winter, persons with songs acquired in these various ways danced possessed at public gatherings held for the purpose.”²⁶⁷ The potlatch among the Stó:lō community “was a much larger intercommunity gathering. It lasted several

²⁶⁵ Wayne Suttles, “Spirit Dancing and the Persistence of Native Culture Among the Coast Salish” In *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: University of Washington Press, 1987), 199-208, 204.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

days, or even weeks, it was held in the late spring and early fall.”²⁶⁸ A component of potlatching on the Northwest Coast included the “scramble”, wherein “gifts were distributed according to the rank of the guests, though the Coast Salish favored a general scramble - blankets tossed from a platform to the guests below - for all but the highest ranks.”²⁶⁹

Aside from the two major types of ceremonials, the feast and the potlatch, there were other ceremonies that had different functions within the Stó:lō community. The *sxwó:yxwey* ceremony, for example, was traditionally and still remains a very serious and valued cleansing ceremony. The *sxwó:yxwey* has multiple purposes: “(s)uch a ceremony was used to wipe away a disgrace... and more commonly, to enhance occasions such as the bestowal of an inherited name, a girl’s puberty, the initiation of a new dancer, a wedding or the display of a memento of the deceased.”²⁷⁰ Another example is the first salmon ceremony, which articulated and highlighted Stó:lō reverence for the salmon. It is said that “the salmon, it was believed, were beings who lived like people in their own world but came yearly as fish to give their flesh to humans, who were obliged to treat them properly.”²⁷¹ The first salmon ceremony emphasized reciprocity and giving thanks to the environment.

Since 1890, when representations of Stó:lō ceremonial life fully became a focus in anthropology, it is evident that Stó:lō ceremonial life underwent numerous changes, due to both

²⁶⁸ Ibid. For additional discussion of the potlatch tradition among multiple Northwest Coast communities, see: Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver and Seattle Washington: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990). Chaikin and Cole aptly describe that potlatch as “a very complex institution” of which “any brief account inevitably does it an injustice.” (6)

²⁶⁹ Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand*, 7.

²⁷⁰ Suttles, “Central Coast Salish”, 468.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

internal community shifts and external influences, specifically the potlatch ban. Aboriginal history scholar Douglas Cole notes that that “(i)n many areas, Natives opted, largely of their own volition, to alter or abandon the ceremony. The Coast Salish, the Haida and the Nishga fall generally into this category. The pressure to discontinue came largely from within the communities.”²⁷² Interpretation of anthropological sources indicates that it was believed that “among the Salish, the potlatch was disappearing, especially in the Fraser Valley, where the last potlatch is said to have taken place about 1915.”²⁷³ During the years between 1884 and 1951, when the potlatch was legally banned, the ceremony went through a number of noticeable changes. While it may have appeared that the Stó:lō potlatch disappeared during the early part of the century, there is evidence that indicates it simply changed place. Anthropologist Michael Kew notes the continuity of Coast Salish ceremonials during the potlatch ban:

Funerals had always been potlatch occasions, that is, times when ritual services were required of non-kin and reciprocated with gifts, and although these gradually incorporated elements of Christian services they preserved Indian belief about the dead and depended on ritualists to attend to the dead and their possessions.²⁷⁴

Indeed, my work with Archie reveals that the revival of traditionalism over the past 50 years was not necessarily a rejection of the ritual and ceremonialism and spirituality of the western Christian and secular forces. Moreover, and notably, for the purposes of this dissertation, the four-year memorial to commemorate Archie’s passing embodied features of the potlatch – specifically the giveaway portion, in which the host family prepares gifts to be given to each of the attendees.

²⁷² Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand*, 61.

²⁷³ Suttles, “Private Knowledge”, 8.

²⁷⁴ Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900”, 476.

The Shaker Church provided a context for ceremonial practice that developed as distinct from the potlatch and feasting ceremonies in Stó:lō. The inclusion of Christian practice and theology while maintaining qualities of Stó:lō ceremonial practice defined the church. Although there is debate about the Shaker Church's origins, it is known to have developed during the 1880s²⁷⁵ and is described by eminent anthropologist Wayne Suttles as: "(n)ominally Christian, in actual practice it is an extraordinary blend of old shamanistic performances with Catholic ritual and Protestant doctrine."²⁷⁶ The Shaker Church became popular among Salish communities, for it is noted that "by 1900, conversion to Christianity, namely Roman Catholicism, was nearly universal among the Central Coast Salish"²⁷⁷ and that "the Shaker Church had spread by that time to Central Coast Salish villages."²⁷⁸

The integration and participation of Stó:lō people in a wage labour economy was another factor in the continuity of Stó:lō ceremonial practice. As a result of the movement of Stó:lō communities to canneries and hop yards, the ceremony did not cease, but rather, changed place. Historical records indicate that in the 1890s, hop yards had "sprung up throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*, providing wage labour for many Stó:lō."²⁷⁹ Further, by "1894, [the Department of Indian Affairs] DIA reports that almost all Stó:lō people were employed at the canneries between June and September. As soon as fishing season was over, all the Indians returned to their reserves and

²⁷⁵ Wayne Suttles, "The Plateau Prophet Dance Among the Coast Salish" In *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: University of Washington Press, 1987), 152-198, 155.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900", 476.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Carlson, *Atlas*, 166

harvested their crops.”²⁸⁰ It is noted by historian John Lutz that while “the availability of paid work transformed seasonal patterns, it did not eliminate the seasonal nature of life for most Stó:lō.”²⁸¹ Lutz adds that “During the era of potlatch prohibition, the hop yards also provided opportunities for large-scale social and political gatherings.”²⁸²

By participating in local work opportunities such as logging, working in canneries and hop-yards, “Stó:lō were not seeking to change or replace past ways of life, but rather to participate more fully in their own economy, which had similar features to the European system but emphasized saving up goods to give away at *stl’e’aleq* (potlatches).”²⁸³ As a result of the introduction and success of wage labour economy within the community, potlatching and ceremony became less visible as a result of the transformation, but continued regardless.

Within the community, varying perspectives on the potlatch existed, which are evident in petitions made to the Government regarding the ban on potlatching. As noted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, historical records indicate that “In 1915, people from Stó:lō, Sechelt, Squamish and other tribes issue[d] a petition that support[ed] the banning of the potlatch”, while “in 1922, various BC tribes petition the superintendent general of Indian Affairs, protesting the banning of the potlatch.”²⁸⁴ Through time, Coast Salish ceremonialism continued to change place, form and function. By the 1960s, it was evident that:

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ John Lutz, “Seasonal Rounds in an Industrial World” In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 64-65, 65.

²⁸² Ibid, 64.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Carlson, *Atlas*, 168.

In spite of differences between Canadian and American systems, and among bands and tribes, the Coast Salish continued to form a social network linked together increasingly with other Coast Salish, by summer festivals with canoe racing, ‘Indian pageantry’,... winter dancing and self-awareness stimulated by cultural programs.²⁸⁵

Archie was integral in this revitalization movement with his work as founder of the Seabird Island Cultural Festival, which continues to this day and will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five. By the 1960s, there was also a resurgence of ceremony involving spirit dancing among the Stó:lō communities and their neighbors. Anthropologist Michael Kew states that “from the early decades of the 1900s when the number of spirit dancers was probably at its lowest point, spirit dancing has shown a marked resurgence,”²⁸⁶ adding that, “the greatest expansion had been in the Puget Sound and Fraser Valley areas.”²⁸⁷

While Michael Kew asserts that the resurgence of spirit dancing coincided with the removal of the prohibition on potlatching in the *Indian Act* of 1951, scholar Pamela Amoss suggests “that the change of the law was probably less significant than the gradual relaxation of opposition to dancing among those in authority.”²⁸⁸ Legal, social, political and cultural variables all indeed influenced the changing forms and function of ceremonial life in Stó:lō and shaped the diverse ways in which Seabird Island community members, including Archie’s family, practiced their traditions in new hybrid forms. In recollections to his great-grandson Zack Joe (*Nwéwtm*), Archie Charles recalled bringing “Granny”, Josephine Seymour (“*Memxa*”), to underground

²⁸⁵ Suttles, “Central Coast Salish”, 473.

²⁸⁶ Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900”, 479.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Pamela Amoss, “The Persistence of Aboriginal Beliefs and Practices Among the Nooksack Coast Salish.” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, Seattle: University of Washington, 1972), 46-47 in Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900”, 479.

winter dance ceremonies while they were illegal during the potlatch ban. During this time, Stó:lō people held them secretly and in private to avoid interruption from law enforcement. Although Archie was not initiated into the Longhouse as a dancer, spending time with *Memxa* attending ceremonies was part of his formative experience. Without stating where he took her, he said when they could not make the secret dances, *Memxa* would go walk a ways in the bush and he would hear her sing her song out.²⁸⁹

Conclusion

A presentation of Archie's *sqwélqwel*, including his genealogy or "true news" of his adoption and growing up on Seabird Island during the 'hungry thirties', reveals a community in transition and the genesis of the highly adaptive ethos and syncretic spiritual practice he nurtured throughout the rest of his life. The adoptive household of Mary and Dave Charles in which Archie grew up reflected a religious and spiritual practice that embodied Roman Catholic sacrament and Stó:lō ceremonialism, including Winter dancing and the use of ancestral names.

Seabird Island has long been a place where people find new ways to innovate and adapt, revealing the flexibility with which many generations of Stó:lō people have faced the challenges imposed upon them by change (economic, social, cultural, spiritual, political and familial). My analysis of Archie's narrative contributes to a growing recognition among scholars that perceptions of a dualism vis-a-vis contemporary Indigenous religion and Christianity is out of step with the lived reality of many Indigenous people. By examining the way Archie displayed agency in creating his spiritual and personal ethos about education, work and religion that both

²⁸⁹ Zack Joe, correspondence with Meagan Gough, August 29, 2012.

incorporated and rejected aspects of his formative experiences, my analysis helps historicize Indigenous spirituality, and reminds us of the validity of historian Alleta Biersack's observation that, despite the homogenizing influences of globalization, Indigenous people do indeed continue to find new ways to be different. Building upon this *sqwélqwel*, the following chapter will present and analyze the residential school testimonials of both Archie and his mother to better determine how this experience shaped their lives in the areas of education, work and religion – and thereby to reveal the highly personalized ways in which Stó:lō people like Archie and Mary interpreted and made meaning of their experience with newcomers.

CHAPTER THREE: NATIVE AND CHRISTIAN – A MULTIGENERATIONAL TESTIMONIAL NARRATIVE OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND MEANING-MAKING.



Pictured here (front left) along with his siblings and grandmother Josephine Seymour, Archie prepares to board the train to take them to Kamloops IRS some 250 km away from his home on Seabird Island. He and other Stó:lō children travelled out of *S'ólh Téméxw* to attend this school. Archie spoke very little of his time at residential school and this is the only photo known to exist of him at that time. As is illustrated in Archie's narrative of his residential school experience, Archie embraced the promise of formal education as presented to him via his mother's belief in education, passed down to her from her father, despite his radically different experience. Similarly, he embraced and maintained aspects of his Roman Catholic upbringing. So despite the explicit assimilationist goals of IRS – to missionize and educate - Archie found syncretic means to carry on his familial teachings, thereby strengthening his family, community and cultural identity.

The two established assimilationist goals of residential schools - the missionization and education of Aboriginal children - did not always turn out as the colonizers intended. Archie Charles was enrolled in Kamloops Indian Residential School (IRS) for nine years.²⁹⁰ (see **Figure 3.1**) After having spent much of his time at the school doing manual farm labour, Archie left at age 16 without a high school diploma and without an exclusively Roman Catholic religion. Through an interpretation of Archie's residential school experience, it is evident that while the impact of this experience was profound and complex, it did not have the predictable outcome some past scholars have suggested when exploring 20th century Indigenous religious practice as either "assimilation" or "resistance." My reflections on this aspect of Archie's life lead me to conclude that Archie did not interpret his time at residential school as exclusively one where he was confronted with a mandate to be assimilated, but rather a period of his life where Catholicism also came to inform him in unintended ways. He acquired tools that he later utilized in his own personal and community life to develop a strong identity as a Stó:lō leader who was both a proponent of formal education and a practitioner of a syncretic blend of Catholicism and Stó:lō ceremonialism. Archie Charles' personal narrative of his residential school experience challenges the lingering "dualist" assumptions about contemporary Indigenous religious experience ("Christian" vs. "Native") by illustrating the dynamic and fluid ways in which he engaged in a spiritual ethos and practice. This chapter explores how he came to embody such a layered – and at times, at least to outside appearances, contradictory sets of spiritual practices as a result of an early experience in one of 20th century Canada's most devastating assimilationist practices: enforced residential schooling. In the text *Native and Christian*, edited by James

²⁹⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

Treat, the questions are posed: “What does it mean to be Native? What does it mean to be Christian? Should Christian identity be subordinated by Native identity or vice versa? Is it possible to be both Native and Christian in any meaningful way?”²⁹¹ The collection of essays meaningfully explores these questions by examining theological, political, communal and personal expressions of cultural and religious identity, and these topics in turn inform this chapter. Inspired by Treat’s questions, I explore what Archie’s and Mary’s distinct narratives about their residential school experience illuminate about the unique and highly personalized ways that Indigenous people enact a religious and spiritual ethos that at once accommodates and resists the missionizing process administered via residential schools.

Archie chose not to fully disclose certain aspects of his residential school experience to me and therefore, this account is limited by that choice. While his omissions could be seen as “gaps”, they may also be understood to simply reflect the way that Archie chose to interpret, frame and narrate his experience to me at this time of his life. As such, strength lies in our having undertaken a family-based style of collaborative research that produces the possibility of interpreting other forms of Archie’s communication, including actions, silences, gestures and events. Adding to this interpretation are the interviews I conducted with family members following his death to further understand the nature and meaning of his silences. Additionally, the availability of interview recordings with adoptive mother Mary Charles adds a context that provides a depth and breadth what we could otherwise not know about Archie’s residential school experience. Mary more fully elucidates her experience and spiritual ethos, talking at

²⁹¹ James Treat (ed), *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.

length about Roman Catholicism, her residential school experience and the family values she sought to pass on to her adopted children. As a result, we gain a multigenerational perspective on the residential school experience through two localized and personal narrative accounts.

Through this analysis of Mary's and Archie's narratives, we bear witness to first-hand accounts of Indigenous people's residential school experience, which were few and far between in the tapestry of Canadian history prior to the 1990's. While the missionizing experienced by First Nations peoples via residential schools was a common one and a shared experience across the country, personal narratives such as these serve as a powerful means of revealing the highly localized and personal experiences of survivors.

The variation between Archie's and Mary's recollections of their residential school experience, in both content and form, reveal the value found in historicizing residential school experiences. Their narratives highlight the diversity of generational, local and personal experiences within the schools as well as the individual ways that survivors cope with their memories and share their stories. Embracing Canadian history in this more holistic manner builds a foundation upon which we can move towards justice for Indigenous people and reconciliation between newcomer and Aboriginal societies. It is only when we acknowledge and then include these diverse stories in the historical record (and consequently demand their presence in formal and informal education) that a true dialogue may begin.

In recent years, scholars advancing postcolonial and postmodern theory across disciplines have focused increasingly on understanding expressions of cultural hybridity. Based on recognition that there is no singular, homogenizing Indigenous experience or perspective, studies of hybridity emphasize the ongoing dialogue and negotiation of identity, place and space

between Native and newcomer that is at the core of colonial encounters. Pertinent to this work is cultural theorist Homi Bhabha's discussion of the "location of culture" and the concept of "liminality"²⁹² as it relates to the construction and maintenance of cultural identity. Bhabha asserts that:

(w)hat is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of subject differences.²⁹³

Traditional scholarship exploring Indigenous religious beliefs and practices has tended to limit Native experience to a dualism between "Native" ("traditional"/resisting assimilation) or "Christian" ("modern"/ assimilated).²⁹⁴ Currently, there remain historiographic gaps in scholarly

²⁹² The concept of liminality, or "what exists in between", is central to contemporary anthropological thought and more recently, postmodern, postcolonial scholarship. The concept of liminality was first used by ethnographer Arnold Van Gennep in his 1908 work, *The Rites de Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). However, symbolic anthropologist Victor Turner more fully reengaged the concept in his work, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), which included the essay entitled "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage". From this discussion, Turner built towards an "Anthropology of Experience", expanding the concept of liminality narrowly used by Van Gennep to explore small-scale societies' rituals, to a methodological focus within anthropology understanding the context-sensitive and emergent nature of culture and cultural expression. In *The Anthropology of Experience*, the collection of essays edited by anthropologists Victor Turner and Edward Bruner, German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey is quoted as saying: "Selves, social organizations and cultures are not given, but are problematic and always in production. Culture change, culture continuity and cultural transmission all occur simultaneously in the experiences and expressions of social life." (Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, edited by H.P Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 203; cited in Bruner and Turner, *The Anthropology of Experience*, 12.)

²⁹³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-2.

²⁹⁴ Broadly speaking, examples of traditional scholarship that explore Indigenous experience within the context of traditionalism and assimilation form the corpus of the works produced during the "salvage paradigm." As noted in Chapter One, this emphasis occurred in congruence with the amendment to the *Indian Act*, which included the lifting of the potlatch ban in 1951, at which point Stó:lō spiritual life and ceremonialism became more "visible" to anthropologists. Many of the texts during this time focused on the impacts and manifestations of culture change and

works that present the complex ways in which Indigenous people in the 21st century have constructed blended spiritual practices that draw on their local cultural experience and make meaning out of their life post-residential schools.

How Archie Charles made meaning out of his residential school experience consequently impacted his perspectives on and life experience in three key areas: work, spirituality and education. Explored in this chapter are the questions: how did Archie's views of religion, spirituality, education and work, resulting from his formative experiences, co-mingle throughout his life? How did he seek to reconcile his experiences, and how does this process fit within a broader movement taking place in Canada to seek out truth, reconciliation and justice in an attempt to resolve the legacy of the residential school system?

To answer these, I present both Mary and Archie Charles's recollections of his school days attending Kamloops IRS. I first engage the current discourse of testimonial and truth-telling narratives related to trauma and illustrate how this work is impacted by the established goal of reminiscent research, which focuses on how memory shapes identity in the present. Next I discuss the impact of Archie's silences and omissions methodologically, illustrating how oral history methods may shift to interpret actions, silences and gestures as a means of ensuring that narrators maintain the ability to tell their story in their own words. Finally, I discuss and examine other survivor narratives from Kamloops IRS, in an attempt to more fully contextualize Archie's residential school experience.

the revival of tradition, while turn of the century texts had emphasized the "salvage paradigm", which focused on attaining authentic representations of Stó:lō culture, as it was assumed it would disappear. For example, see Boas, *Indian Legends* and Maud (ed.), *The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout*.

Testimonial and Truth-Telling Related to Trauma and Residential Schools

As discussed in Chapter One, literary scholar Sophie McCall suggests that in the told-to genre, “there is always a gap between recorder and storyteller, even when the interlocutors belong to the same community or family, and even when they follow a careful collaborative process.”²⁹⁵ Further to this, if it is held true (as it was in my work with Archie) that “the subject decides what to tell and how to tell it”²⁹⁶, then how Archie recounted aspects of his life story reveals much in addition to the content of his narrative. Archie’s residential school experience differs greatly from that of his mother, Mary Charles, both in content and form (narration). This difference adds depth to the understanding that individual residential school experiences were highly personalized – there is no singular experience. Through listening to, valuing and including multiple testimonials, we can contribute to the creation of a more accurate historical record on the topic which can only be presented in the words of those who lived through it, on their terms, as survivors of the experience. Doing so holds the potential to reveal how individuals find meaning out of the reconciliation process in accordance with the truth of their own life experience.

Truth-telling, or what is sometimes referred to as ‘speaking truth to power’, as a vehicle for healing, cultural resistance, renewal and reconciliation is the explicit intent in a number of recent works in which residential school survivors share their experiences. In the introduction to *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential Schools*, editor Agnes Jack observes that “the stories told here represent a wide range of experiences – some are good, but

²⁹⁵ McCall, *First Person*, 6.

²⁹⁶ Pratt, “Culture Wars”, 41.

many more are not. The stories are told in the storyteller's own words..."²⁹⁷ Further, she notes "Many of the stories tell of oppression, abuse and cruelty, but they are told without malice. All storytellers came forward to share their stories, not to find blame, but so that there would be a better future for their children, and their children's children."²⁹⁸

Archie was born into an historical era in which the residential school system was far-reaching into the homes and hearts of Aboriginal people and the sustained impacts of colonialism were a detriment to the maintenance of Aboriginal rights and culture. Archie's life narrative illustrates how, through personal agency, he refused to be a victim of historical circumstance, determining appropriate action through accommodation, resistance and innovation.

"He Didn't Like to Talk About It": Reflections on Oral History Methods Related to Trauma

Archie chose not to fully detail his experiences relating to the Kamloops IRS. However, he consistently foregrounded for me lessons he learned, as well as funny stories and the positive impacts of school on his life. He did not explicitly recount negative feelings, trauma or stress, though his gestures and certain anecdotes reveal his resistance towards the subversion of Stó:lō culture and language which he experienced at school. In this sense there are "gaps" in his narrative. However, if we respect Archie as the narrator and authority of his life story, then what he chooses to tell and what he chooses to omit can be revealing. As such, it was up to me as

²⁹⁷ Jack, Agnes (ed.), *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential Schools* (Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 2006), xii.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

collaborator to adjust my methods of interpretation and representation to reflect the truth of his story as told to me.

A significant shift in discourse related to oral history and memory took place as a result of oral historian Louisa Passerini's *Memory and Totalitarianism* (1992). In this important work, Passerini sought to explore the relationship between memory and history, in places in which people had experienced collective trauma or lived under the "silencing" rule of totalitarianism. In these places, she argues, truth and memory must be contextualized to include consideration of the omissions, silences, half-truths or "versions of history" that cater to the listener, which people may tell in order to protect themselves. The strength of this work is that Passerini alerts us to the social politics of truth telling. It is, she poignantly remarks, sometimes in the omissions, or silences, where the truth lies.

As the work of scholars such as Julie Cruickshank have revealed, oral narratives are social, political and temporal acts shaped by the dialogical elements of the relationship between speaker and listener. Archie may have and likely would have, related his experience differently to other members of his generation who were also survivors of the schools. As I would come to realize over our time together and reflect on following his passing, Archie typically framed his life experiences, particularly those which would have been traumatic, stressful or emotionally charged, in terms of lessons learned, funny anecdotes and impacts rather than on emotional disclosure or the revelation of private feelings. In this sense, he seems to have drawn a distinction between what memories belonged in the public versus the private sphere. As English scholar Kristina Fagan similarly observed in her analysis of early Aboriginal biographical writings of Inuit author Lydia Campbell and Stó:lō logger Hank Pennier, Indigenous narrators do

not necessarily follow the Western literary tradition of disclosure, with a focus on the details of personal life. Oral historian Rosanne Kennedy's work proves useful here as well. In it, she explores the contested memories of Australian Aborigines who were taken from their families and placed in foster families or state institutions and compares how memory is produced and treated in a number of different contexts. Kennedy argues that "personal testimonies should be regarded as sophisticated interpretive narratives that incorporate sharp social and historical insights."²⁹⁹ In terms of theory, she draws upon recent theoretical approaches to Holocaust and abuse survivor testimonies to establish the usefulness of different approaches to understanding testimony. The psychoanalytic approach utilized by intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra and the discursive approach "focuses on issues of interpretation, agency and authority in the process of making witness."³⁰⁰ Both approaches, she argues, "enable us to understand testimonies not simply as evidence, which places the historian in the role of expert, nor as literature, which makes them marginal for history's purposes of establishing what happened in the past, but as contributions to historiography in its own right."³⁰¹

Perhaps most relevant and supportive of a methodology that seeks to honour both the narrator as authority and the narrative produced as a "truth" is the work of oral historian Joanna Bornat. In "Reminiscence and Oral History: Parallel Universes or Shared Endeavor?", Bornat sets out to examine the parallel fields of oral history and reminiscence/life review work and how they might improve from cross-disciplinary collaboration in a number of ways. For Bornat,

²⁹⁹ Rosanne Kennedy, "Stolen Generations Testimony: Trauma, Historiography and the Question of 'Truth'" In *The Oral History Reader*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 506-520, 506.

³⁰⁰ Kennedy, "Stolen Generations", 507.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

reminiscence work is best described as work that is “primarily concerned with the value of remembering for the narrator”, while “oral history is primarily concerned with the historical understanding”³⁰² that results from memory. Bornat suggests that these two disciplines, although clearly inter-related, are quite distinct and could benefit from each other by uniting “about the nature of memory and remembering later in life; about dealing with traumatic memories of the past and in the challenging present circumstances of old age; about reminiscence groups and other social contexts for remembering; and about the value of interpreting present memories in partnership with narrators.”³⁰³

Reminiscence work on the value of memories for the individual is of particular interest in the recording, framing and presenting of Archie’s life history, especially his residential school experience. As Bornat states, “for oral history, the older person has been viewed as the source of evidence; for reminiscence and life review the older person, who they were and who they are now *is* the evidence.”³⁰⁴

My experience working with, listening to and learning from Archie and other Aboriginal people (more specifically residential school survivors), has impacted me emotionally in a deep and profound way. To assist me in working through these often troubling narratives, I have embraced the focus of reminiscence work on the value of the present and continued presence of a community. The survival of a people to tell their stories is thus reconceptualized as an integral aspect of the story itself.

³⁰² Joanna Bornat, “Reminiscence and Oral History: Parallel Universes or Shared Endeavor?” In *The Oral History Reader*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 456-473, 456.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Bornat, “Reminiscence and Oral History”, 470.

Bornat's article goes on to lay out a series of similarities and differences between oral history and reminiscence work, and concludes that interdisciplinary sharing can be of benefit in the following ways: oral history can gain from incorporating this more holistic approach, by adding interpretive layers once the "person who is" comes to be valued as the "person who was."³⁰⁵ In contrast, reminiscence/life review researchers can gain from oral historians a "recognition of the significance of the told story and its place in the history of a particular life, community, or society."³⁰⁶ This is why, in order to add depth and context to the version of his residential school experience narrated to me, I also interviewed some of his family members. Zack Joe (*Nwéwtin*) related to me that generally, when recounting his experience but particularly his memories of residential school, Archie rarely got into negative effects and mostly framed his stories in terms of the "lighter side."³⁰⁷ Perhaps even more concisely, as daughter Rose Charles simply recalled: "He didn't like to talk about it."³⁰⁸

A Multigenerational Residential School Narrative: Mary Charles

Archie's longstanding relationship with academics described in the introductory chapter is similar to, and it could be argued, inspired by the commitment of his mother to not only formal education, but history, learning and education of all kinds. Mary Charles contributed significantly to the works of a number of anthropologists and scholars throughout her life by sharing aspects of her knowledge and history with anthropologists such as Marian Smith who

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Zack Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

³⁰⁸ Rose Charles, correspondence with Meagan Gough, November 5, 2012.

travelled to Seabird Island in 1945 as instructor for the Columbia University Ethnographic Field School. Among others, Mary was also interviewed a number of times by amateur anthropologist Oliver Wells about her knowledge of cultural life and practices.³⁰⁹

Mary Charles was a student at St Mary's Indian Residential School (IRS)³¹⁰ located in Mission, B.C.³¹¹ In her 1972 interview with Roy Point as part of the Stó:lō initiated Skowkale History Project, Mary Charles begins by recounting her recent trip to Ottawa and meeting Pierre Trudeau as part of a delegation from St Mary's IRS composed of former students and the school marching band. Her reflections provide additional insight into her residential school experience, especially how it shaped her views of work:

I suppose all of us experience things in different ways. There are some who never liked boarding school life. For myself, I can only say that St. Mary's was good to me. It was strict but so was everything else in those days. We had only a half day class but outside class I learned to knit, to sew, to cook, to dress make and to needlework, to look after vegetables and of course to scrub and wash.³¹²

When Mary describes the teachings of her father, it seems that for him, for her and consequently, for Archie, formal education was valued and perceived as a necessary means by which to acquire tools for living while at the same time maintaining cultural identity. She recalls her conversation with her father and his words to her about education:

I was going to become a teacher. My father didn't want me to, eh? ...The nuns wanted to train me as a teacher, go down to Westminster and take a teacher's course. My father said 'you go down there and work among the white people and you'll never come home to your Indian people. I didn't educate you to work for white people; I educated you to help

³⁰⁹ Her contributions appear in Oliver Wells' work *The Chilliwack and their Neighbors* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).

³¹⁰ Dates uncertain.

³¹¹ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

³¹² Woods, "St. Mary's", 68.

our people... Our Indian boys need help more than the white man.'...I thank my father for putting sense in my head!³¹³

She went on to recall how her father taught her to interact with non-Native people and yet maintain her cultural identity:

Old people taught us to dislike White man. My father was different; he took to the White people's ways right away. Right away, from the start! He'd tell me 'You were here before him! If he didn't want to look at you, just look at him and smile and tell him 'poor Indian doesn't know any better!'³¹⁴

Mary Charles' Syncretic Practice of Stó:lō and Christian Teachings: *Shxwelí*, Ancestral Names and Protocols for Reciprocity

While she was encouraged to attend Residential School, Mary was also provided with a strong cultural grounding and identity at home. She explained one aspect of her cultural identity passed on to her – her ancestral name. In 1972, Mary describes being covered as a young woman with a Thompson (*Nlaka'pamux*) ancestral name, that of her father's mother, in a ceremony held in Spuzzum. She described the event as a big celebration and feast in which people from Lytton, Merritt, North Bend and Spuzzum were in attendance. There were three "head men" or chiefs hosting the ceremony who covered Mary and two others with names. She recounts that the "head man" "poured the white part of the duck... the fine, fine feathers, on my head", declaring "We call her *Lalamexw*."³¹⁵

³¹³ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

In another recollection, she recounted an event that highlights the tension between Stó:lō spiritual practice and Catholicism when a local priest arrived at a winter dance ceremony unannounced:

Father Fouceaux³¹⁶ used to come around in the wintertime, when the people were dancing. He came to Harrison one time to a dance. They were dancing in Harrison; they had a big house there for dancing. He came - he walked right in. He took a crucifix in there and everybody kept quiet, eh. Wasn't a drum, there wasn't a sound in the hall. He just walked through there... I bet you today a priest couldn't do that in the hall, they'd kick him out. Just shows how uncivilized our young people are getting' to be! Our old people, they were more civilized than our young people are today. Old Chief Harry was the one who told me about this...³¹⁷

Mary's means of reconciling the two spiritual paradigms presented to her via her spiritual teachings and Roman Catholicism is evident in a story of the arrival of religious prophets told to her by old Chief Harry. In the story, it becomes evident that the Stó:lō protocol of honouring the *shxwelí* (life force),³¹⁸ expressed through offering prayer in reciprocity for harvesting resources, was misinterpreted by *Xwelítem*:

³¹⁶ Unsure of spelling.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ The concept of "*shxwelí*" describes the "spirit or life force" that connects Stó:lō to all resources: resources alive with the spirit of ancestors articulated in *sxwōxwiyám*. The late Stó:lō Elder Rosaleen George shared teachings about the meaning, value, and nature of *shxwelí* to Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts'i*). McHalsie, a traditionally trained knowledge keeper describes the relationship between *shxwelí* and caretaking responsibilities in the article "We Have to Take Care of Everything That Belongs to Us", in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, edited by Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 82-130. He similarly described *shxwelí* as follows in our 2011 interview: "I went to see the late Rosaleen George and that's what she said, I asked her "what is *shxwelí*?" and she puts her hand on her chest and says "*shxwelí* is inside here, your parents, your grandparents, your great, great grandparents, your great, great, great grandparents it's in the rocks, it's in the trees, it's in the grass, it's in the ground." So you look at that word and *shxwelí* is in everything, including ourselves and including our ancestors. So that is what connects us to everything that is around us. So they say the *shxwelí* of those ancestors is still inside those resources, the black bear, the beaver, the mountain goat or whatever. It's still inside that stone or

Before white people come, there used to be prophets among the Indians, who used to tell their people there were going to be men who would come and teach them about spirit. Everything had a spirit with Indians, you know? If they were digging roots, the women thanked the cedar for giving them those nice roots. Making baskets, they'd thank that cedar, for giving them those nice roots; and they're not going to waste it. No matter what they did, if they were fishing, they thanked the fish for giving them the food. Whatever they did, they were praying all the time. They say that Indians were savages, they weren't savages!!! That's what Old Chief Harry used to tell me...all these things about the old times...If I had sense I would have written down everything he told me.³¹⁹

Recent scholarship on the topic of Native prophecy and resistance points to the interplay and reconciliation of Christian themes and Native theology discussed by Mary. In *Coming Down from Above: Prophecy, Resistance and Renewal in Native American Religions* (2008), historian Lee Irwin argues: "Native religious traditions have a profound moral centre in the obligations of community and kinship and in animal, plant and nature relatives, as manifest in the reverence, respect and prayerful concern maintained through rite ritual."³²⁰ The type of acceptance and reconciliation demonstrated by Mary in her understanding of Chief Harry's prophecies is also stressed by Irwin as a legitimate approach in this context: "that Native prophets have borrowed from the lexicon of Christian morality cannot be denied, but that such borrowing has been an attempt to compensate for a cultural lack (savagism), I regard as

mountain, we have a close attachment to it; it's part of us. So that creates the relationship that we have. So it's not just a rock out in the forest, it's got the *shxwelí* of our ancestors in there, and we have a *shxwelí* so we're connected and it's important for us to take care of that. So that's a responsibility that lies with all Stó:lō people because all Stó:lō people have a *shxwelí* and all those resources, the stones and mountains they have a *shxwelí*, every Stó:lō person is connected through the *shxwelí* to those things." (Sonny McHalsie, interview with Meagan Gough, May 2, 2011, TRM, in Gough and Schaepe, "Caretaking", 11.)

³¹⁹ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

³²⁰ Lee Irwin, *Coming Down from Above: Prophecy, Resistance, and Renewal in Native American Religions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 10.

completely false.”³²¹ Historian Keith Carlson’s recent research exploring the topic of Salish prophecy supports Mary Charles’ acceptance of the message of the prophet linked to the arrival of *Xwelítem*:

Within Salish historical consciousness the prophet is remembered as having prepared Salish people for the arrival of newcomers who he anticipated would bring positive change to a post-smallpox epidemic chaotic world. In a manner similar to what Elizabeth Vibert has documented in the context of the Plateau prophesy phenomenon, the Coast Salish prophet was operating in a world devastated by recent smallpox epidemics where people were desperate for new solutions to new problems.³²²

For Mary, it would seem embracing non-Indigenous religious teachings did not require her to forego her *Nlaka’pamux*-Stó:lō cultural identity and practice; rather, she integrated the teachings and used them to supplement and strengthen her cultural identity throughout her life.

Mary Charles passed away only a short time after giving the interviews cited here. Of her passing and Catholic funeral, Father Leo Casey wrote: “Mary Charles passed away on September 5, 1974. Hundreds of people came from near and far to attend her funeral. (see **Figure 3.2**) As only half of those present could be accommodated in the Church, loud speakers were used so that those outside could hear the Mass and Homily delivered by Br. Terry McNamara, O.M.I.”³²³ Highlighting the fluidity of cross-cultural learning and exchange at Seabird Island, Catholic priest Terry McNamara also became a Stó:lō winter dancer.³²⁴ While many Catholic clergy

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Keith Thor Carlson, “Orality about Literacy: The ‘Black and White’ of Salish History” in *Literacy and Orality: Reflections Across Disciplines*, edited by Kristina Fagan, Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Keith Thor Carlson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 171. See also Elizabeth Vibert, “The Natives were Strong to Live’: Reinterpreting Early-Nineteenth-Century Prophetic Movements in the Columbia Plateau” *Ethnohistory*, 42:2 (Spring 1995): 197-229.

³²³ Father Leo Casey, OMI, *Stó:lō Nation News*, December 1978, # 39.

³²⁴ Keith Thor Carlson, informal communication with Meagan Gough, Feb 12, 2013.

opposed spirit dancing, anthropologist Michael Kew notes that such practice was not confined to one individual: “While some Protestant clergy active among Indians opposed spirit dancing, the Roman Catholic Church showed accommodation. In the 1960s individual clergy began to attend dances occasionally...”³²⁵

Mary Charles’s experiences at St Mary’s IRS would prove to be very distinct from Archie’s. Through an analysis of both their testimonials regarding their experiences, it becomes evident that, although their experiences were quite different, both Archie and Mary carried forward and maintained their familial and cultural teachings, while synthesizing these traditions with aspects of Roman Catholic teachings.

Mary Charles describes her experience as a student of St Mary’s Indian Residential School as impactful and generally positive. This influenced her Roman Catholic religious practice, including time later spent in a convent and her work as a First Nations Ambassador for St Mary’s school throughout her life. However, Archie’s experience at Kamloops IRS one generation later was not nearly as positive as his Mother’s and revealed the devastating effects of the failure of the residential school system. And yet, despite these radically different experiences, Archie ended up - like his mother, but in distinct ways - building a syncretic religious practice that incorporated Roman Catholicism and Stó:lō spiritual practice and he also (like her) became a strong proponent of formal education and work.

School Days at Kamloops IRS: “We Were Called Devils.”

³²⁵ Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900”, 479-480.

Archie described the massive impact residential schooling had on Stó:lō life: “(o)ur culture is changing. I guess we have to change...it starts from the residential schools and that we were called ‘devils’.”³²⁶ Archie was enrolled in Kamloops IRS and stated that he attended school there for nine years.³²⁷ Prior to his adoption, he had been baptized OMI #252 December 5, 1922, at St. Mary’s Mission by E.C. Chirouse. Records indicate his sponsor was Isaac Louie.³²⁸ Kamloops IRS was a school intended primarily for the local Douglas (*Secwepemc*) children, north of *S’ólh Téméxw*. However, when asked about why he thought he was enrolled at Kamloops IRS, he suggested it was likely due to the fact that it was Catholic, but did not remark on why he was not enrolled in one of the two schools within *S’ólh Téméxw*; Coqueleetza (Methodist) or St. Mary’s³²⁹ (the Catholic school his adoptive mother Mary Charles attended).

³²⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Tim Peters, October 24, 2008.

³²⁷ While Archie did not state the age he was when he enrolled in Kamloops IRS, he recalled he attended Kamloops IRS for nine years (Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007). In our August 9, 2009 interview he recalls he was at Kamloops 10 years, leaving at age 16. The discrepancy of between nine and ten years may in part be attributed to fact Archie’s date of birth is August 28, the time of the commencement of school year.

³²⁸ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles, November 13, 1994.

³²⁹ The Stó:lō residential school experience began in 1863, when St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Residential School opened its doors. As noted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, St. Mary’s, located in *S’ólh Téméxw* near Mission, B.C., was “(p)art of a larger colonial plan to assimilate, Christianize and ‘civilize’ Aboriginal peoples in BC” (Jody R. Woods, “St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Boarding School: A Spatial Analysis” In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 68-69, 68). In 1893, the Coqueleetza Industrial School, a Methodist residential school located in Sardis, B.C. officially opened. The significance of the Coqueleetza grounds to Stó:lō people is clarified in oral histories, which describe how the Coqueleetza site is a place associated with significant stories and teachings for Stó:lō people. The *sxwōxwiyám* associated with of Coqueleetza “affirms respectful, harmonious relations between men and women...” (Jody R. Woods, “Coqueleetza”, 75). “As well as being an important mythological place, Coqueleetza has served many other functions over the years.” (Jody R. Woods, “Coqueleetza”, 74).

He observed that other Stó:lō children also attended Kamloops IRS, including Tillie Guterrez, his half-brother Moody Michelle and adopted siblings Henry Charles and Edna Douglas.³³⁰

At Kamloops IRS, “[v]isitation from family was allowed, however it was uncommon due to geographical distance between the school and student’s parents”³³¹ In the case of Archie and his siblings, with the distance between Seabird Island and Kamloops being approximately 250 km and requiring a train ride, visitation posed a challenge. Archie and biological sister Dorothy Leon commented in our interviews on their different experiences attending different residential schools (sometimes run by different Christian denominations but sometimes by the same faith-group), thereby highlighting the inconsistent administration of the educational model by school administrators and instructors. Dorothy also reflected on the dire experience she had: “I went to Coqueleetza [Methodist] School. I didn’t stay there that many years and the [Catholic] priest came and got me out and brought me to Catholic Mission School. That was terrible.”³³²

Kamloops IRS began operation in 1893,³³³ and throughout much of its operation until its closure was “guided by the Oblates assisted by the Sisters of St. Ann.”³³⁴ The school was built near the edge of the Kamloops Indian Reserve and by 1920, “amendments to the *Indian Act* included compulsory school attendance of Indian children and industrial and boarding schools

³³⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 11, 2010.

³³¹ www.irsr.ca/kamloops-residential-school (download date February 1, 2015)

³³² Dorothy Leon, interview with Meagan Gough, August 1, 2008.

³³³ Jack, *Behind Closed Doors*, xi.

³³⁴ Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 36.

for Indians.”³³⁵ Dr. Agnes Jack noted the following experiences of some children at Kamloops IRS where Archie attended:

Upon arrival the de-humanizing process would begin immediately with the shaving of heads and the delousing. Children were physically punished for speaking their own language. These genocidal practices carried on year after year for almost 150 years. In the process, families were destroyed, languages nearly became extinct, cultural, spiritual beliefs and rituals were eliminated.³³⁶

As demonstrated in Susan Fournier and Stó:lō author Ernie Crey’s work, *Stolen from Our Embrace*, the residential schools were the beginning of a sustained colonial process by which Aboriginal families were undermined in their authority and experienced the forcible removal of children from their homes over the past century. Archie spoke to his own experience of the residential school system disrupting and dislocating families. The priest at his school, aware of his biological ancestry, shared this with him prior to his own knowledge of his adoption. With a dismissive laugh, he said: “And I guess I went to school with one of my brothers, and I didn’t even know. The Priest tried to tell me and I just walked away from him. I thought he didn’t know what he was talking about!”³³⁷

According to the testimonials of other former students at Kamloops IRS, Archie’s experience of being separated from his siblings at school was the common practice. “Not only were older and younger siblings separated, but in the spirit of old Catholicism, males and females were isolated from one another ... More than one student reported seeing her brother

³³⁵ Ibid, 31.

³³⁶ Jack, *Behind Closed Doors*, xiii.

³³⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

once or not at all during years of attendance at the school.”³³⁸ Archie spoke to me on one occasion about the impact of residential schools on Stó:lō families and relationships. Shaking his head with a dismissive laugh he said:

Yeah...oh, I guess them residential schools had something to do with it you know? We got to look after each other, regardless of where we go, we need our families, that's the way it's always been. That's the way they were too, but they didn't build a church with different religion and have to go by their laws. There were quite a few kids in there who went in there who the parents would just get rid of them or whatever.³³⁹

The impact of colonization of First Nations peoples within residential schools took many forms: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical, with new survivor's accounts continuing to emerge over time. Historian Mary Ellen Kelm states that the schools were designed not merely to assimilate, but to “colonize Indian bodies.” She writes that the ethos of the schools was “[p]redicated on the basic notion that the First Nations were, by nature, unclean and diseased, residential schooling was advocated as a means to ‘save’ Aboriginal children from the ‘insalubrious’ influences of home life on reserve.”³⁴⁰ Although he never discussed it with me, Archie's military records indicate he was treated for TB at age 13.³⁴¹ The physical impact on his body was still evident, as his record states: “This young North American Indian says he was in hospital at Kamloops, B.C., for 2 months at age 13 years old with TB. X-Ray shows ‘pleural adhesions in left costo-phrenic angle.’”³⁴² Archie was not alone in being exposed to serious or dangerous diseases. As stated by Kelm, “the schools themselves offered scant salvation from

³³⁸ Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Talicum Press, 1988), 54-55.

³³⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

³⁴⁰ Kelm, “Scandalous Possession”, 52.

³⁴¹ Archibald Charles, Physical Entrance Exam Records, Canadian Army, March 18, 1944.

³⁴² Ibid.

physical illness and disease. In fact, rather than preserving the bodies of the children who were intrusted in their care, the residential schools tended to endanger them through exposure to disease, overwork, underfeeding and various forms of abuse.”³⁴³ The inter-generational impact of the schools on the minds, spirits, hearts and bodies of Aboriginal people is unquestionable. The system failed - it did not produce the “strong, robust bodies, well-trained for agriculture and domestic labour of the schools’ propaganda, but weakened ones who, through no fault of their own, brought disease and death to their communities.”³⁴⁴

Archie: “They Tried to Kill our Language.”

Archie’s residential school experience, only one generation following that of his mother Mary Charles’ school days, proved to be very different from hers in a number of ways. This “experiential change” also highlights not only the continued breakdown of the missionizing process but the variation of administration that existed within schools and shaped individual experience. Mary Charles’ recollection that children were permitted to speak their Native languages while in school, even recite the Lord’s Prayer in “Indian” until 1907 exists in stark contrast to Archie’s reported experience. Archie described fighting to maintain his cultural beliefs while in school, despite being separated from other Stó:lō children and not being permitted to speak his language. He stated to me in a somber tone:

That’s one thing I had against residential schools, you couldn’t talk your own language.

³⁴³ Kelm, “Scandalous Possession”, 51.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 52.

But they [the administrators] were smarter too, they took four or five [Native children] from here, put six there...all the way to the foot of the Rockies. [pauses to reflect] Couldn't talk to your own sister or brother. None of that.³⁴⁵

On another occasion he spoke of his thoughts about the attempt of residential schools to subvert Native languages:

They tried to kill the language. Because there was some of them [children at Kamloops IRS] from the Okanagan, some from the Thompson and through Merritt, down Cache Creek and they'd have couple of carloads from here, or the way from Vancouver. They mixed it all up so you couldn't communicate in your lingo, eh? But it all [*Halq'eméylem* language] came back, or pretty well.³⁴⁶

Archie himself spoke very little *Halq'eméylem*. While he spoke of it being “killed” in the residential schools, his lack of opportunity to learn his own language was also exacerbated by the passing of his grandmother, Josephine Seymour, a fluent *Halq'eméylem* speaker. Mary Charles states she did not speak the language on a regular basis when Archie was a child, after Josephine Seymour's passing. As a result, upon returning home from residential school, Archie would have had limited opportunity to speak the language at his home. His frustration regarding his limited opportunity to practice his language was evident when, during the course of our interviews and interviews with other researchers, he would unknowingly be asked to answer a question in *Halq'eméylem* or provide a *Halq'eméylem* term of reference by an interviewer seeking this information. Archie would either remain silent on the topic, use a dismissive gesture and an “ah!” to signal disappointment or begin to describe the impact of the residential schools. Prior to my own understanding of Archie's limited *Halq'eméylem*, I experienced his silence in this manner. This is evident in a 2008 interview with Stó:lō researcher Tim Peters on

³⁴⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

³⁴⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

the topic of the environment. When Mr. Peters asked him questions about *Halq'eméylem* terms, Archie's response shifted from the explicit topic of the environment to residential schools. His silence and redirecting of the topic provides a useful teaching regarding the impacts of colonialism on all forms of Stó:lō history and life.

Archie described how he fought to negotiate his cultural identity and spiritual beliefs, particularly his belief in the Stó:lō Creator *Chichelh Siyá:m*,³⁴⁷ with the school administrators and resist the imposition of a replacement for his creator with a singular Christianised version of "God":

Yeah the Catholic schools didn't like it when we told them that we had to honour our *Chichelh Siyá:m*, 'high chief'. We always had him. '*Chichelh Siyá:m*' : Way up high, high chief."³⁴⁸

So did Archie believe in a Christian God or was he using the term *Chichelh Siyá:m* synonymously with God? Archie's description of his resistance to the condemnation of the Stó:lō expression of, and reverence for, *Chichelh Siyá:m* seems to indicate that, while in Residential school, Archie rejected the missionizing methods used in school (having a Christian "God" superimposed on *Chichelh Siyá:m*), not the idea of a Christian God itself.

While recounting his experience at Kamloops IRS, Archie described how he perceived value in the labour and work taught to him in school:

³⁴⁷ *The Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* more fully describes *Chichelh Siyá:m*: "Our heritage stems from our occupation and use of *S'ólh Téméxw* since the beginning of time, as the first inhabitants of this land. Our world, unlike that of many of our present-day neighbours, includes inseparable spiritual and material realms. The transformation events of *Xexá:ls* and *Tel Swayel* (Sky-Borne People) created places that prove our direct link to *Chichelh Siyá:m*." (Stó:lō Nation, *Policy Manual*, 5).

³⁴⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

One thing I learned though is, I didn't like residential school, but they taught you all the stuff. How to do this, how to do that. Well, go back to the old days. If you don't put in a garden, you'll starve to death. Everybody had a garden, a couple of cows, had their own milk and make their own butter. For two hours a day, rest of the time out there ploughing or... there was no tractors; they had horses. Used to have a little stepladder to get the harness up the horse. They taught us how to look after ourselves and do family work, the ladies, the girls, they had to do all the laundry work, cooking.

As noted in Haig-Brown's work, the civilization process which included a heavy emphasis on farming and gardening skills for boys and sewing, cooking and cleaning for girls created a "result [that] was beneficial to the residential school in two ways: government requirements were met, and the work necessary for maintaining the school was accomplished."³⁴⁹

As Archie described:

Yeah, [I was there] ten years. You learned to work pretty young you know. You had a couple cows, horses to look after, chickens. They grow everything that we have to buy! They had the land and I didn't know it was a reservation at that time, and when the school closed it went back to the Kamloops. I thought all the time they owned it, and up there they had to irrigate the gardens it very rarely rained, kind of like the prairies I guess. Then in the morning, you had to get up, milk the cows, and separate the milk. You always had something to do!³⁵⁰

He shared additional memories about the nature of work and curriculum: "Two hours a day [classroom time] was the limit. Even the girls, they had to cook and do laundry, do laundry for 300 students is a lot of work. We had to do the milking and the gardening."³⁵¹

As Archie recalled, manual labour was central to life at Kamloops IRS: "I would do farm work, regardless of how old you were, you had to milk cows and make your own butter and

³⁴⁹ Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 69.

³⁵⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

all that stuff. It was worse learning, but we went there for schooling.” With a dismissive laugh he concluded: “We lived through it, anyway.”³⁵² He remarked further: “(n)ow I can’t get away from it, I see someone else work, I feel guilty! I see somebody else working and I can’t. (dismissive) Ahh!”³⁵³ It was not until 1946 that a high school program was instituted at Kamloops Residential School. As Haig-Brown notes: “The governments and the missionaries had decided that Native people should be farmers or farmer’s wives, not scholars.”³⁵⁴ Archie’s description of the criteria for being released from school and the path he followed once out of school provides insight into his transition into his early work life: “Whatever came first, grade eight or age sixteen, you were allowed to take off.”³⁵⁵ In his reflections about entering the workforce, he was thankful and proud to have the opportunity to work with his father before he passed from TB:

Yeah, my father was a logger, he taught me, so I followed him. Working on the water most of my life. Boomin’ logs, dumping the loads, sort ‘em out; you learn how to grade the logs. He never went to school, but he was a smart man. I got to work with him. TB was pretty terrible around here.³⁵⁶

Dave Charles, in contrast to wife Mary Charles, had little formal education, yet went on to become a Chief and highly respected leader. Archie talked of how he respected Dave’s abilities greatly, evidenced in his observations that while his adoptive father did not know how to

³⁵² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 28, 2009.

³⁵³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

³⁵⁴ Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 66.

³⁵⁵ Archie Charles’s military records (1944) indicate he left school at the end of grade 8.

³⁵⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

read or write, he was Chief of Chehalis and a good leader. He described his style of leadership and its impact on him:

He would set examples and stuff like that. Like in school, you know how some of them kids answer back or don't listen to the teachers? So he turned around and he started to tell them 'when you're older you're going to have children and they do what you're doing and what will that be? Now get out of the room and go out there and think about it.' I think that's a good trait. Yeah, they can't find an answer they come back, 'I'll do what you say.' Yeah, I was sure sorry when he left [passed away], my dad.³⁵⁷

Archie mentions Dave Charles' diversity of skills and work ethic and affirmed that he would like to see this aspect of his father's story included here:

He had a herd of cattle. Like he held two jobs, worked on the railroad and he had his cows to look after. I mean there was no money in milk and stuff like that. Now it's like gold. [laughs] I think that I'd hand a thank you note for my dad because like I said, he didn't have an education but he made it... he worked side-by-side with lots of them educated guys. I'd say if you're going to put it into the book or whatever, I have him in there to thank about the way I turned out.³⁵⁸

The impact that Dave Charles had on Archie's life would be evidenced later in the latter's life when he was elected as Chief of his community. Similar to his father, he did not have a high school education, but combined knowledge and skills from other areas of his life to become a highly successful leader.

At Kamloops IRS, resistance by students took many forms, as is described in Haig-Brown's analysis of former KIRS student's narratives. "The pockets of resistance were significant at Kamloops Indian Residential School. Those students not directly involved in opposing the rules and regulations were few."³⁵⁹ Further, in retrospect, regarding displays of resistance, "these actions can be viewed as the actions of strong people against a system which

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 114.

degraded and dehumanized.”³⁶⁰ While Archie’s reflections tended to emphasize how he attributed value to the work skills he acquired in school, he also took part in forms of disobedience and resistance while he was there. Although Archie did not recount this to me, great-grandson Zack Joe recalls him talking about the root cellar at KIRS and that he and another student would sneak into the cellar, steal apples and race back and hand them out to all of the other students.³⁶¹ In addition to exhibiting his resistance when telling school administrators he had to honour *Chichelh Siyá:m*, Archie described an incident of rebelliousness that reveals more directly at his unhappiness at school:

Oh yeah, I repaired shoes, take ‘em apart, put ‘em back on. You only got one set of shoes a year. Even the sisters in there, I put hob nails in her shoes one time...just to be ornery I guess! I caught hell for it, anyhow.³⁶²

Archie accepted the notion of formal education and Catholicism presented to him, not through the missionizing tactics he was subjected to at residential school, but through the powerful hybrid teachings of his parents, in particular his mother, Mary Charles. It becomes evident from the interviews with Mary Charles that, for her father also (Archie’s grandfather), formal education attained in the residential schools was embraced as an invaluable tool required for success and upward mobility. Despite their distinct experiences, neither Mary nor Archie perceived Western education as assimilationist; rather they saw it as a means of strengthening cultural identity and gaining leverage within colonial and neo-colonial society. In this sense they both accommodated and resisted assimilation in unique ways. Archie’s narrative reveals that while the administration of his education via residential school was distinct from Mary’s, he

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Zack Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

³⁶² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

carried the value of education forward, passing it on to his children and grandchildren.

Similarly, Archie carried forward Mary Charles' idea of syncretic spiritual practice based on an integration of Roman Catholicism and Stó:lō traditional practices in his own way. This allowed him to form his own fluid yet deeply committed spiritual practice, evidenced throughout the remainder of his life, illuminating the power of his early existence in liminality to the consequential development of his identity. As Homi Bhabha concludes:

These 'in between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference - that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.³⁶³

Paulette Reagan, current Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,³⁶⁴ bases her new work, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, on the premise that "how people learn about historical injustices is as important as learning the truths about what happened."³⁶⁵ Inspired by this, I ask: how did Archie go on to make meaning out of his early formal religious instruction at IRS, and his parents' Catholic and cultural teachings? What

³⁶³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

³⁶⁴ On February 24, 2012, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its *Interim Report*. Additionally, the TRC also launched a new historical publication entitled *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools*. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada *Interim Report* "reflects activities undertaken by the Commission since June 2009 and provides 20 recommendations that touch on five key areas including the operation of the Commission, education, support for survivors, reconciliation and commemoration. It represents a brief summary of what the Commissioners have heard directly from as many as three thousand former students and staff who were most affected by the schools." See full document: http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/TRC%20News%20Release%20-%20TRC%20Interim%20Report.ENG.Feb24_Final.pdf (download date November 12, 2012).

³⁶⁵ Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 11.

becomes apparent is that Archie, much like his parents, had a highly personalized and syncretic spiritual practice based on his interpretation of residential school teachings, lessons from his Elders and a rich, full body of life experience.

An official apology, issued by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008 to all Aboriginal peoples adversely affected by Indian residential schools, was the first time a Canadian Prime Minister formally apologized to Aboriginal communities for the abuse they endured while students at these federally funded, church-run schools.³⁶⁶ While some form of apology has been made to First Nations peoples for the collective injurious experience they had within the schools, the Catholic Church has been criticized for not going far enough in their apology. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' website provides reasons why an apology on Residential Schools has not been made by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops or in the name of the Catholic Church in Canada. However, in a brief submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in November 1993, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops did acknowledge that "various types of abuse experienced at some residential schools have moved us to a profound examination of conscience as a Church."³⁶⁷

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to ask new questions of the million plus historical records related to residential schools research collected by the Government and provided by various church entities. As an educational tool, this unprecedented

³⁶⁶ "PM cites 'sad chapter' in apology for residential schools," CBC, June 11, 2008.

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/aboriginal-apology.html#ixzz0xd6Zb6T8> (download date August 21, 2010).

³⁶⁷ http://www.cccb.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2630&Itemid=1019&lang=eng (download date November 28, 2012).

collection of documents can serve to educate the public about historical government policy and practice, particularly related to the Aboriginal education system. These records also serve as a moral, ethical and spiritual reminder of the sustained impact the residential school system has had on the First Nations peoples of Canada. As recommended in the September 19, 2007 *Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement* (IRSSA), the TRC's mandate is to commemorate and build on the personal "truths" of the experiences of residential school survivors found in these historical records by working closely with First Nations peoples across Canada to record their impact statements, which reflect their personal and community histories. This powerful form of truth telling supplements information found in the official written records.

In addition to the significant steps being taken at a policy and community level by First Nations peoples, the volume of literature about the residential schools also increased exponentially during the 1990s.³⁶⁸ J.R Miller, in his now seminal work *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (1996), characterizes residential schools as an instrument of attempted "cultural genocide" – a term also employed by American Indian activist Ward Churchill in *A Little Matter of Genocide: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (1997) to describe such policies and programs. Miller, along with many others, asserts that residential schools "had gradually become the vehicle of the newcomers' attempts to refashion and culturally eliminate the first inhabitants' way of life and identity."³⁶⁹ Since Miller's work was published in 1996, there has been a substantive increase in the writings about

³⁶⁸ See also John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996).

³⁶⁹ J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 10.

the topic of residential schools, particularly by First Nations peoples and survivors. These new testimonials and personal histories of Native residential school survivors are invaluable on many levels: not only for the powerful healing and reconciliation effect such documents may have for the narrators themselves, but also because such testimonials and personal histories contribute to the process of compiling accurate and full records of this dark and, until recently, unacknowledged reality of Canadian history. Archie's narrative of his residential school experience contributes to a growing body of Canadian literature that addresses the legacy of the residential school experience.

There is a historiography of some depth about Kamloops IRS in particular which helps to contextualize Archie's narrative. An early example of testimonial writing by a First Nations author about their experience at residential schools is *My Name is Seepeetza* (1992) by Salish author Shirley Sterling. While intended for a youth audience, this work has had a broader impact. By drawing upon her journal entries as a young girl attending residential school, Sterling provides a powerful personal account of her time at Kamloops IRS in the 1950s. Educator Celia Haig-Brown's award winning book *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (1988) presents the testimonials of former students at Kamloops IRS and conveys important insights into the nature of daily life at the school experienced by both boys and girls. Haig-Brown's book has been of particular relevance to this work, as the narratives of other former KIRS students help to contextualize what Archie shared - and also significantly, chose not to share - of his own experience.

Following this, there have been a number of recent publications emphasizing the recollection of survivors' stories as first-person narratives, including Dr. Agnes Grant's *Finding*

My Talk: How Fourteen Canadian Native Women Reclaimed their Lives After Residential School (2004), a work in which First Nations' women reflect on their residential experiences. Of particular relevance to situating Archie's narrative within an appropriate context is the recent publication of narratives from former students who also attended Kamloops Indian Residential School in *Behind Closed Doors: Stories From the Kamloops Indian Residential School*, edited by Dr. Agnes Jack (2006).

Numerous members of Archie's generation who were former students of residential schools, specifically Kamloops IRS, went on to become political leaders like Archie. Chief Simon Baker and George Manuel are two examples of survivors who have also engaged in their own told-to narratives. As contemporaries of Archie, they shared many similarities in terms of the IRS experience. The highly individualized experiences and interpretations of schooling that are presented in their told-to narratives also illuminate the distinct ways in which survivors choose to frame, interpret and narrate their histories. In particular, Manuel's and Archie's lives shared many parallels.³⁷⁰ In his 1974 told-to narrative *Fourth World*, Manuel writes about his time at Kamloops IRS stating that "[t]hree things stand out in my mind from my years at school: hunger; speaking English; and being called a heathen because of my grandfather."³⁷¹ Being nearly the same age, Archie and Manuel were contemporaries at KIRS. Step-daughter Caroline

³⁷⁰ Manuel was born February 21, 1921 to Maria and Louie Manuel on the Neskonlith reserve in the *Secwepemc* territory of the Shuswap people. He too, was first educated at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Like Archie, he was also hospitalized for tuberculosis and following residential school worked in the logging industry before entering politics. He eventually became Chief of the Shuswap Nation, a position he held for seven years. He was a then elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. <http://www.spiritmap.ca/georgemanuels11.html> (download date November 22, 2014)

³⁷¹ Manuel, *Fourth World*, 63.

also states that while Archie didn't like to talk about his residential school experience, when he read Manuel's *Fourth World* it triggered him to recall one of few emotional stories about his time at Kamloops IRS:

That's when he mentioned the boy, I don't know how old the boy was, but he was new to the residential school they saw while they were doing their chores, which was farming. I think he said he didn't see that boy afterwards. He didn't know if he got sick, went home or what could have happened to him? But they didn't see him afterwards when they were talking about the hardships at residential school. He always said he learned a lot of good things at residential school.³⁷²

Stó:lō Cultural Resistance and Revival in *S'ólh Téméxw*: Repatriation of Coqueleetza IRS

Stó:lō cultural resistance to assimilationist strategies is clearly illustrated by efforts of community members to reclaim the Coqueleetza grounds. Between 1968 and 1979, the Stó:lō people engaged in a series of ongoing negotiations with the federal and B.C. governments in order to secure control of Coqueleetza.³⁷³ This culminated in May 1976, when numerous Stó:lō individuals, including Archie, then chief of Seabird Island, occupied the site. As a result, “twenty-six protesters were arrested for their participation in these demonstrations. The resistance achieved its goal and in 1994, the old hospital and nurses’ dormitory-cum-barracks were renovated and became the current Stó:lō Nation administration buildings.”³⁷⁴ The efforts to reclaim Coqueleetza were the starting point of a continuing period of cultural resistance, renewal and revival that is similarly reflected in the contemporary impetus to repatriate Stó:lō cultural property.

³⁷² Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

³⁷³ Woods, “Coqueleetza”, 75.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

The successful transformation of Coqueleetza from a place associated with colonial practices and the subordination of Stó:lō culture to a place where the revival and continuity of Stó:lō culture flourishes is significant. It reflects the contemporary effort by Stó:lō people to engage in processes that revive and renew their culture. The significance of the transformation of the grounds is articulated by current research director of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Jody Woods: “This new ‘cleansing place’ is now a centre for cultural renewal where the pain of unfulfilled assimilation policies is washed away...”³⁷⁵ The re-appropriation by Stó:lō people of cultural knowledge in recent years reflects a contemporary desire to both protect and share Stó:lō culture. Part of the Nation’s mandate is to do so in ways that are both ethically and culturally appropriate.

Resistance, Renewal and Healing at Kamloops IRS

Similar initiatives to remember, renew and heal in culturally relevant ways were undertaken by the *Secwepemc* community (the territory where the Kamloops IRS is located). Their resistance existed during the operation of the school and continued after it closed. As J.R. Miller notes:

The Indians resisted coercive education in a number of ways. Most simply they refused to surrender their children to the school and Indian Affairs authorities, no matter what police officers or agents said. Those who were still migratory or semi-migratory, as was often the case on the west coast, could simply remove themselves from the reach of those who enforced the compulsory attendance provisions.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Miller, *Skyscrapers*, 268.

Kamloops IRS closed its doors in 1977. Since that time, the school building itself has been “repatriated” through the work of the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, to house the Secwepemc Museum, which opened its doors in 1982.³⁷⁷ The museum is but one of a number of cultural and educational initiatives undertaken by the *Secwepemc* people to reclaim and re-tell their history, thereby adding depth and perspective to the available record of residential school experience at Kamloops IRS. In addition to the work *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School*, an excellent documentary, *The Fallen Feather: Indian Residential Schools and Canadian Confederation*, adds further depth to the historical record of the experience of Kamloops Residential school survivors. This documentary includes not only oral history testimony by a number of residential school survivors, but also provides documentary evidence, such as photographs of Kamloops IRS.³⁷⁸

Reconciliation, Justice and Making Meaning: Archie’s Experience

Archie’s experiences, post-residential school - particularly in the areas of his life related to work, education and culture - provide insight into how he made meaning out of his experience. Archie went on to apply for and receive a Common Experience Payment³⁷⁹ as compensation for

³⁷⁷ To virtually visit the museum, see <http://www.secwepemcmuseum.com/plan-your-visit/things-to-do/secwepemc-museum> (download date November 28, 2012).

³⁷⁸ The Fallen Feather Documentary can be found at <http://www.fallenfeatherproductions.com/credits.html> (download date August 28, 2013).

³⁷⁹ The Common Experience Payment (CEP) was a concrete outcome of the long-anticipated Indian Residential School Settlement Act (*IRSSA*). The CEP was intended to embody “the spirit of reconciliation and healing” of the *IRSSA* by providing any eligible former student of a recognized Indian Residential School (IRS) with a lump-sum payment as recognition of their experiences while there. The CEP recognizes the experience of residing at an Indian

his years in attendance at Kamloops IRS. He used some of his settlement money, to purchase a new wheelchair for great-granddaughter “Bo Peep”, who has spina bifida. Of his residential school experience he once remarked to me: “They owe me a few dollars, I think...Nine years...I was in Kamloops.”³⁸⁰ Archie reflected one time that in relation to the residential school resolution and compensation process in general, “the lawyers got all the money. They were dishing it out. The whole thing was wrong to start with.”³⁸¹

J.R. Miller concludes that the residential school system, on the whole, was a failure. Miller argues that, “Natives wanted education that would enable them to adjust successfully to the dominant Euro-Canadian economy and society.”³⁸² Further, for both government and church, “...a major reason for their inconstant dedication to the pursuit of learning was their commitment to the assimilative program that had always underlain their understanding of the purpose of residential schooling.”³⁸³ Miller’s conclusion surmises that, “At times it was difficult to tell if the department’s [DIA’s] view that Aboriginal peoples were a ‘dying race’ was an observation, a predication, or a policy assumption.”³⁸⁴ What is clear, however, is that in Miller’s assessment, “By any reasonable standard of evaluation, the residential school program from the 1880s to the

Residential School and its negative impacts. As stated on the Federal Government website, “Eligible applicants may receive \$10,000 for the first school year (or partial school year) of residence at one or more residential schools, plus an additional \$3,000 for each subsequent school year (or partial school year) of residence at one or more residential schools. Eligible recipients will receive a one-time payment of their full CEP entitlement.”

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/cep/index.shtml> (download date September 21, 2013).

³⁸⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

³⁸¹ Archie Charles, interview Meagan Gough, June 1, 2009 (not recorded/only notes)

³⁸² Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 416-417.

³⁸³ Ibid, 419.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 302.

1960s failed dismally.”³⁸⁵ Building on public awareness and a critical interpretation of the impact and legacy of the Indian residential schools system, Paulette Regan remarks that Canadians are still on a:

[M]isguided, obsessive, and mythical quest to assuage colonizer guilt by solving the Indian problem. In this way, we avoid looking too closely at ourselves and the collective responsibility we bear for the colonial status quo. The significant challenge that lies before us is to turn the mirror back upon ourselves and to answer the proactive question posed by historian Roger Epp regarding reconciliation in Canada: how do we solve the settler problem?³⁸⁶

***Chichelh Siyá:m* and “the Big Guy”: How Archie Enacted a Syncretic Spiritual Practice**

Archie maintained a syncretic religious practice throughout the remainder of his life, as evidenced in a number of areas. Archie often spoke in this type of vernacular, referring at different times to the “big guy”, “God”, “*Chichelh Siyá:m*.” On one occasion, while we were speaking together up at fishcamp, he shared his views of conservation and sustainability, linking these concepts to principles that were both Stó:lō and Roman Catholic:

Yeah. It comes from the Bible I guess, Catholic I guess, we were all taught Catholic ‘don’t waste anything’ like the old people said ‘*Xólhmet te mekw’stám ít kwelát*’ ‘look after everything that’s ours.’ Because that guy up there is not gonna make no more worlds. I don’t know how to say that one, but it’s right. It comes from the Bible ‘If you ruin it, it’s your fault.’³⁸⁷

In the innovative work *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, historian James Treat focuses on this very type of intersection between religious experience and historical tradition. He asks:

³⁸⁵ Miller, *Skyscrapers*, 269.

³⁸⁶ Reagan, *Settler Within*, 11.

³⁸⁷ Archie Charles, Interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

How do Native Christians understand the relationship between Christian history and the Native religious heritage, between written scriptures and oral traditions? How do Native Christians critically appropriate these collective, historical realities in light of their own personal, subjective, spiritual experiences and perceptions?³⁸⁸

While Archie participated in Roman Catholic practices throughout the remainder of his life, he maintained an equally grounded Stó:lō spiritual practice, seemingly interweaving and treating them equally as his synonymous use of terms for Creator would indicate. Other scholars have explored Indigenous understandings and interpretations of a Christian God expressed under times of cultural social duress.³⁸⁹ Does one believe in God because they say the word God? How is the Bible interpreted and understood by those who had it imposed on them through colonization? As stated previously, Archie's reflections indicate that while in residential school, he rejected not the idea of a separate Christian God, but the administration of having a Christian God elevated above or replacing Stó:lō *Chichelh Siyá:m*.

³⁸⁸ Treat, *Native and Christian*, 19-20.

³⁸⁹ One powerful example of scholarship which raises questions about an individual's interpretation of Christianity and how Indigenous peoples give voice to and consequently make meaning out of Christianity in localized and personal ways is historian Carlo Ginzberg's innovative 1976 work *The Cheese and the Worms*. Drawing upon the story of Minnochio, *The Cheese and the Worms* is a study of religion and culture in the sixteenth century as understood through the eyes of a common miller who is uncommonly literate, and who is brought to trial during the Inquisition. Ginzberg draws upon Italian trial records to demonstrate how one person responded to the confusing political and religious conditions of his time, and through expressing his own interpretation of the Bible, was deemed a heretic despite being a deeply religious man. While standing trial, Minnochio recasts the Bible, stating of the genesis of the Universe that: "I have said that, in my opinion, all was chaos, that is, earth, air, water, and fire were mixed together; and out of that bulk a mass formed - just as cheese is made out of milk - and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels. The most holy majesty decreed that these should be God and the angels, and among that number of angels there was also God, he too having been created out of that mass at the same time. (Carlo Ginzberg, trans. Anne Tedeschi and John Tedeschi, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 4-5.

As a young man, he was covered with two ancestral names: the *Nlaka'pamux* name “*Nwéwtm*”³⁹⁰ from Mary Charles’ side, which was once carried by Paul Yowala of Spuzzum and the *Halq’eméylem* name “*Texeyelh*”³⁹¹ from Dave Charles’ side of the family. In one of our interviews he described the meaning of his ancestral names and receiving them:

AC: Yeah, Paul Yowala name is supposed to mean “big Chief”, it comes right to me, you know.

MG: What was the story of how the name was passed on to you, from Josephine Seymour, how was it given to you?

AC: It was the name of a chief at Chehalis; the other was from a Chief from Spuzzum.

MG: So, two Chiefs’ names...

AC: Yeah

MG: Was there a ceremony to give you those names?

AC: Yes, just the family, you know, not like now, it’s the whole school.

MG: Were you given *Nwéwtm* first?

AC: Yeah, that’s my Thompson tribe, Stó:lō side is *Texeyelh*.

MG: Now [great grandson] Kelsey has that name.³⁹²

Archie passed on both his ancestral names prior to his death in 2010: *Nwéwtm* to step-grandson Ronald “Zack” Joe and *Texeyelh* to great-grandson Kelsey Charles, son of Rose Charles. However, I asked Archie on one occasion what was required to earn an ancestral name, to which he responded: “Well, work without being...mostly its law, it goes through the books, be patient. You try to help people and you don’t say (lowering tone for emphasis) ‘you owe me’ for it, do it for nothing...”³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Archie also states the name *Nwéwtm* was passed down from Baldy Yowala from Spuzzum. Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997. Also spelled “*N’wowelin*”; Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997. “*Nwéwtm*” alternate spelling described more fully in Chapter 5.

³⁹¹ Also spelled “*T’xaex*”; Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997. However “*Texeyelh*” was spelling used at Archie’s memorial in 2014 and provided to me by *Nwéwtm* March 11, 2015. Of note is Archie stated of his name “I can’t spell it though”. Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

³⁹² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

³⁹³ Ibid.

Though he recounted that he would often take his grandmother *Memca* to winter dances during the times of the potlatch ban, he himself never became an initiated winter dancer.

However, he perceived there to be power and merit in such cultural expression:

...Couldn't even put up a [winter] dance without it being shut down...but it's just now starting to come back. It took years and I don't know if any of his great grandchildren speak it. I don't follow dances anymore. There's something in it that makes them feel better. They get along better. It brings people together.³⁹⁴

Currently, many members of Archie's family (including great-grandson Zack Joe) participate in winter dancing, which - along with other forms of Stó:lō ceremonialism - has experienced a revival since the 1970s.³⁹⁵ As fear of repercussions for practicing ceremonies of all kinds under the *Indian Act* has slowly dissipated, winter dancing is being embraced and experienced openly by community members once again. Along with the youth, Stó:lō Elders as well are taking up winter dancing for the first time.³⁹⁶ Whereas dancers traditionally would go into the longhouse for the entire winter to live and practice, today many winter dancers now go to jobs during the day and stay in the longhouse at night throughout the winter season. Altering some elements of participation in a traditional practice such as winter dancing in this way illuminates how highly adaptable and, indeed, flexible Stó:lō ceremonial life is. Later in his life, around 2006,³⁹⁷ Archie, along with partner Tina Jack and family began hosting "burnings" facilitated by spiritual advisor John Cayou from the Upper Skagit Tribal Band in Washington

³⁹⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Tim Peters, October 28, 2008.

³⁹⁵ See Pamela T. Amoss, "Strategies of Reorientation: The Contribution of Contemporary Winter Dancing to Coast Salish Identity and Solidarity", *Arctic Anthropology* 14 (1) (1977): 77-93 and "The Fish God Gave Us: The First Salmon Ceremony Revived", *Arctic Anthropology* Vol. 24, No. 1 (1987): 56-66.

³⁹⁶ I am aware of one Stó:lō Elder who just commenced participation as a winter dancer last year and is in his 60s.

³⁹⁷ Interviews with family members vary, but indicate it was between 5-7 years ago.

State. As noted in Chapter One, that type of feast is intended to honour the ancestors by “feeding” them their favorite foods and offering prayers while opening lines of communication between members of the spirit and material worlds. In one of our discussions, Archie described how he believed that the residential schools were created to demolish Stó:lō cultural and spiritual identity. We discussed the burning or “feast” that had been hosted at his house by his family a few days earlier.

AC: A burning, I guess it’s what you call a Indian... I guess sort of a religion among the tribes, you burn food and stuff like that.

MG: You put cookies in for my grandma.

AC: Hah?

MG: You put cookies in for my grandma this year and last year.

AC: Oh, yeah.

MG: Which I really thank you for. Thank you for including her.

AC: Oh, yeah, we had a big crowd this time.

MG: Can you tell me about, like, the burnings, when did that start in Stó:lō ?

AC: Oh, way back when. On every reserve they did it. I was a little guy, went to Harrison, Harrison Mills, they had [a burning] at North Bend, a table about as big as this house, dishes all over the place. That’s why they start them residential schools, they said it’s the devil’s work or something. (lowering his voice to a whisper) They said forget it.”³⁹⁸

Despite this opposition, Archie maintained a flexible and emergent spiritual practice throughout the course of his life: a practice that incorporated Christian and multiple forms of Stó:lō spiritual ceremony that he found useful and meaningful at different times. The kind of flexibility and dynamism Archie’s narrative illustrates is consistent with historian Lee Irwin’s remarks:

Native spirituality has been in a constant state of adaptation to colonization and settlement for a period of 450 years... The heart of Native religions is found in the viability of natural (and ceremonial) relations with less visible psychic and spiritual worlds that imbued Native peoples with the capacity to face the near destruction of their cultures.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

³⁹⁹ Irvin, *Coming Down from Above*, 5-6.

Irwin's comments illuminate that the fluid quality of Indigenous spirituality is not a rare or extraordinary practice for Indigenous peoples themselves, even given the complexity and depth of the impact of colonialism, and specifically residential schools, on all aspects of life. Irwin's comments support the conclusion that Archie and other Stó:lō people in the last century developed a variety of strategies to enable them to integrate parts of Christianity into their spiritual life as they saw fit, creating a plethora of syncretic practices that positioned them to carry forward their traditions in meaningful ways to suit - and give meaning to - their contemporary environment.

Conclusion

Both Archie and Mary Charles shared a commitment to community-based formal education that can perhaps best be witnessed in the facilitation of their shared dream of a community school for Stó:lō youth at Seabird Island. In 1991, while Archie was Chief, the Seabird Island Community School was opened and given the name *Lalme' Iwesawtexw*, meaning "House of Learning" in *Halq'eméylem*. The school was named after Mary Charles in recognition of her long-held dream of seeing a First Nations band-controlled school in her community. The school itself has a remarkable and culturally significant design – it is constructed to look like a salmon jumping from water. (see **Figure 3.3**)

Archie separated the experience of residential school from the value of Western-style education, and as such went on to be a strong proponent of formal education – run by First Nations. His belief in the value of providing local educational opportunities was further demonstrated when he donated land, passed on to him by Mary Charles, to be used by the Seabird Island Band to build *Lalme' Iwesawtexw*. As proudly noted by great-grandson Zack Joe

(*Nwéwtñ*), all of Mary and Dave Charles' adopted children went on to be leaders in education."⁴⁰⁰ Archie's commitment to Aboriginal-run education will be explored further in Chapter Five.

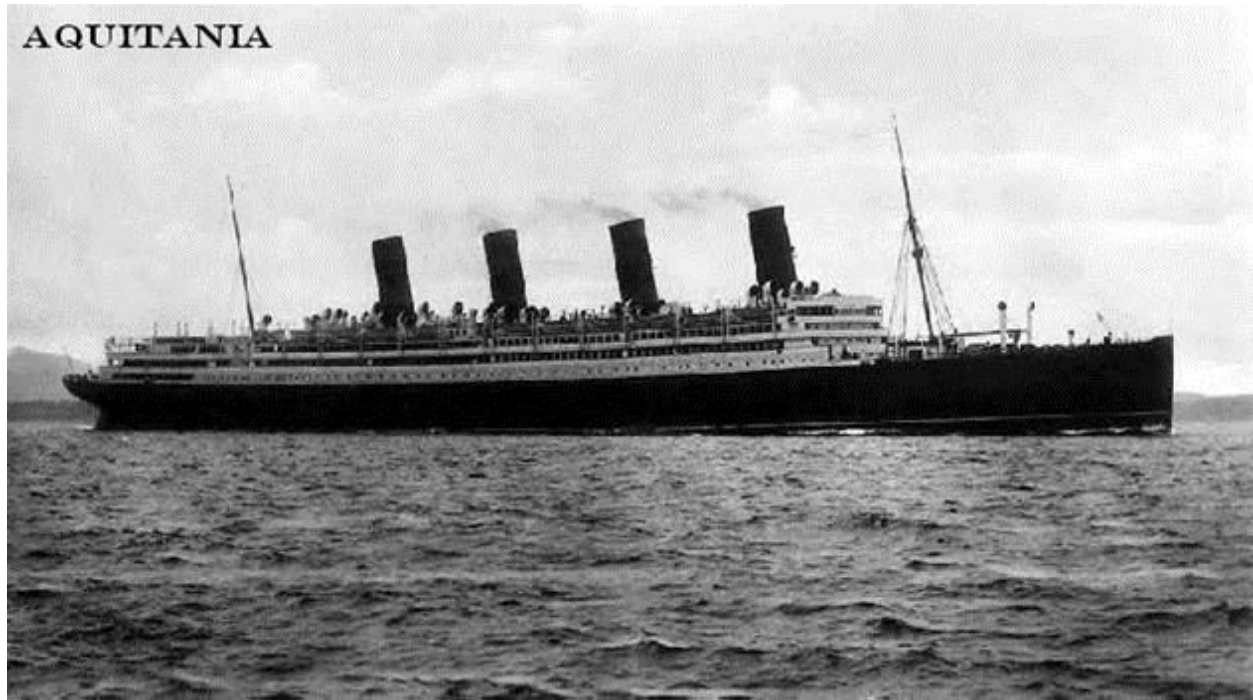
In conclusion, Archie's residential school experiences shaped his life and his world view, but they were tempered and adjusted by the strong familial teachings and support he received in all areas and periods of this life. While he embraced many of the tools provided to him via the residential school, he rejected the means by which the residential school system enacted those teachings. Displaying agency, given that in his words he "didn't like residential school", he chose to accept some aspects of his education and experiences to strengthen his cultural identity and family teachings. Beginning with the values of Mary Charles' father, passed down through Mary Charles and taught to Archie, and now to Archie's children and grandchildren, for five generations, education has been viewed as a necessary means by which to strengthen Stó:lō ability to support and develop their community and cultural identities. Despite his complex experience within the residential schools during such a dark chapter of history, Archie maintained a commitment to education (both Western and cultural) throughout the course of his life. Adding depth to Archie's future leadership style was his father Dave Charles' strong commitment to work (as a farmer, rancher, gardener and logger) and leadership (reflected in his time as Chief). Archie's ability to keenly observe, adapt and make meaning out of his own experiences was particularly evident during one of our discussions about the re-naming of the street he lives on by the government in recognition of his accomplishments later in life: "You see my new address? They spelled it wrong. It's supposed to be "*Nwéwtñ* Drive", but they got

⁴⁰⁰ Zack Joe, informal Correspondence with Meagan Gough, September 20, 2012.

“Inmountain Drive”. [Laughing] But that’s OK because Mt. Cheam is right behind us!!”⁴⁰¹ It appears that for Archie, even when the Government got things wrong, he found a way to make the errors meaningful and turn them into a teaching moment.

⁴⁰¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

CHAPTER FOUR: THROUGH THE EYES OF A SOLDIER AND VETERAN – NEGOTIATING STÓ:LŌ IDENTITIES IN WAR AND PEACETIME



Archie served 29 months on active service for the Canadian Army during World War II. As a young man in his early twenties, his military participation brought with it challenges, but also adventure. In our discussions, Archie typically related his military experience in terms of funny anecdotes, stories of adventure and his reflections on *Xwelítəm* [non-Natives] he encountered and who fought alongside him. Archie recalled how when he and the other servicemen finally arrived on the east coast, “they kept us in Halifax until they had enough to make a trip [overseas]—I’d say about a thousand men, pretty close.”⁴⁰² He was soon to board the RMS *Aquitania*, “a former cruise ship requisitioned on November 21st, 1939 by the British Admiralty to serve as a troopship. Over the following four years, she traveled throughout the world transporting Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and U.S. troops.”⁴⁰³

In a story he recounted to great-grandson Zack (*Nwéwtən*), Archie recalled the sense of awe he felt when he first boarded ship in Halifax. He further mused there were hundreds of ships. When he woke up the next morning, he saw nothing but ocean.⁴⁰⁴ Little did he know that he would contribute to Canada’s role in the historic liberation of the Netherlands.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴⁰³ <http://www.relevantsearchscotland.co.uk/ships/ships/019aquitania.html> (download date, February 12, 2015).

⁴⁰⁴ Zack Joe, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, January 22, 2013.

⁴⁰⁵ RMS *Aquitania* photo www.esacademic.com (download date January 12, 2015)

This chapter interprets and analyzes Archie Charles' experience of serving in the army during WWII as a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry ("PPCLI") and how he, along with the greater Stó:lō community, made meaning out of his military experience in peacetime. After interviewing several Stó:lō WWII veterans, Keith Carlson argued that even as the Canadian public embraced a mythologized version of Aboriginal soldier as "warrior" in the post-WWII era, restrictions in government policy continued to exclude Native veterans from the places of congregation as well as from the benefits accessible to non-Native veterans. In addition, according to Carlson's analysis, returning WWII Stó:lō soldiers also faced misunderstanding from within the Stó:lō community, where they were understood within the context of a traditional "warrior" ("*stómex*") – a role that was at odds with the ideal cultural role of *Siyá:m* - a peaceful leader and negotiator. Thus, after having experienced a new kind of social equality to non-Natives in the military while overseas, Stó:lō veterans like Archie struggled to reintegrate not only into the racially prejudiced world of the *Xwelítem*, but also into the Stó:lō world. My own research builds on this foundation. Currently, the available historiography on the topic of Aboriginal military participation is small. Particularly helpful within this small- yet growing- body of research is the work of military historians R. Scott Sheffield, Whitney Lackenbauer, and Craig Leslie Mantle, which explores First Nations' military participation; namely the diverse, often disparate cultural experiences soldiers had as a result of their participation in WWII. The works of Sheffield et. al also forms the core historiography detailing the propagation of the popular post-WWII myth of Native "soldier as warrior" and its lingering impact on public perception and policy. Of the narrow historiography that explores how Indigenous people made meaning of their military participation socially and culturally upon re-

entry into their communities, the comparative work of anthropologists John Adair and Evon Vogt, which examines the cultural dynamics apparent in the reintegration of Zuni and Navajo veterans in the late 1940s, proves useful, as does the work of historian Robert Innes, which investigates the experiences of Native vets in Saskatchewan.

In 1992, Archie Charles and his half-brother Joe Gabriel, a fellow WWII veteran, were nominated by the Stó:lō Tribal Council leadership to be the first ever Stó:lō Tribal Council Chiefs to hold the title of ‘Grand Chiefs’. Then, in 1993, Stó:lō Tribal Council held the first ever Remembrance Day Ceremony in recognition and commemoration of the contribution of Stó:lō veterans. What social, cultural and historical factors took place to instigate this shift?

In their 2007 article “Moving Beyond ‘Forgotten’: The Historiography on Canada’s Native Peoples and the World Wars”, Sheffield and Lackenbauer observe that a key gap in the current historiography is localized, cultural and personalized accounts of military participation. As they state, “In recognition that Aboriginal peoples do not constitute a monolithic group, their contributions to the World Wars also invite regional and local study.”⁴⁰⁶ They further establish that more biographies of Native soldiers are needed, stating:

Biography...is a wonderful vehicle for exploring the world wars. As much as war is a national experience, it is also a deeply personal one, and biography’s narrow focus accommodates attention to diversity.... That numerous Aboriginal veterans went on to become prominent political figures also makes their stories important to document for future generations.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ P. Whitney Lackenbauer and R. Scott Sheffield, “Moving Beyond ‘Forgotten’: The Historiography on Canada’s Native Peoples and the World Wars,” *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives*, edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle (Kingston: Canadian Defense Academy Press, 2007), 209-231, 225.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Archie Charles' life history narrative, including his recollections and interpretations of his military and veteran experience, responds to the gap established by Sheffield and Lackenbauer and serves as an Indigenous account of 20th and 21st century Native-Newcomer relations. It demonstrates how he adapted the tools and strategies he gained from his military experience, both in terms of training and awareness of non-Stó:lō society and became one of the most universally well-regarded traditional leaders in modern Stó:lō history. In doing so, his narrative challenges the myth of the “noble warrior” while revealing the complex process undertaken to renegotiate his identity within his own culture. Another area of research greatly overlooked by military historians is the impact military participation had on Native personal, social and cultural life in both war and peacetime, a gap this work contributes to closing.

In terms of methodology, I seek to contribute to a growing body of scholarship about the politics of memory and the various versions of “true” histories one may share, depending on the listener and audience. How Archie presented his military experiences to me and the choices he made in selecting (sharing words/gestures) and omitting (sharing silences/gestures) certain recollections of his experience directly impacted the consequent means by which I framed and presented his narrative. As a result of Archie providing me a version of his military history which was specifically tailored to me (as opposed to other veterans, Stó:lō people, members of his generation and gender), I sought to adjust my methods and sources to best supplement the events told to me by analyzing the other ways in which he conveyed the impact on his life: a combination of words actions, events and silences. The 1994 research and oral history interviews with Stó:lō veterans conducted by historian Keith Carlson, anthropology MA students Ed Labinski and Pauline Joly de Lotbiniere as well as undergraduate student Heather Woolard

have been immensely helpful to contextualize and add specificity to Archie's narrative, particularly his recollections of his time overseas. Specifically, the oral history interview Labinski conducted with him in 1994 as part of the "Stó:lō Veterans Project" provides a valuable opportunity for contextualizing the ways in which Archie recalled his military experience at a different time of his life and to a different listener, illuminating the subjectivities of time, memory and the listener-narrator dynamics present in oral and particularly told-to narratives with veterans.

Together, Archie and I applied for and received copies of his personal military records. Given we were unable to review them together before his passing, I spoke to his family members, particularly great-grandson Zack Joe (*Nwéwtm*) to seek context and clarity in determining how to interpret Archie's silences and omissions. As such, this chapter is organized into two sections. The first describes and analyzes Archie's enlistment in the Army, his training and his recollections of his military service, both at home and overseas in England and North West Europe. Building on the oral history he shared with Labinski and with me, I then draw upon his military records to critically locate his story within the broader experience of Aboriginal Army enlistment in WWII. This also provides insight into the construction by Government administrators (in this case, military personnel) of what Sheffield calls the "administrative Indian."⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ In his ground-breaking historical work, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the Indian and The Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), historian R. Scott Sheffield explores the construction and impact of images of the "Indian" articulated by English Canadians in the administrative structures of the state and those expressed in the broader public realm during the 1930s and 1940s. He defines the "administrative Indian" as "the working image of the Indian developed by the officials of the Department of Indian

The second section of this chapter explores how Archie (and the greater Stó:lō community) made meaning out of Stó:lō military participation during war and peacetime. Given the established cultural role, responsibility and status of the *Siyá:m* and *stómex* in Stó:lō society, I was curious to learn how Archie reconciled and negotiated his war-time experience with Stó:lō and popular views of Stó:lō soldiers as warriors upon his return to civilian life? In what ways, I wondered, did he derive personal meaning and significance from his experience? Did his military service shape his ethos, and if so, in what way? And what impact did his military participation have on his private, public and cultural life in both war and peacetime?

History of Military Participation in Archie's Family

In the summer of 2003, when I first interviewed Archie as part of a Stó:lō Nation-sponsored project, Archie shared his views of the cultural heritage repatriation in relation to Stó:lō military participation. He recounted the cultural protocols for repatriating human remains and stressed how it bothered him deeply that the remains of his adoptive step-grandfather Noel Seymour, who fought in WWI, were never returned to be given a proper burial in *S'ólh Téméxw*.⁴⁰⁹ Archie emphasized to me that it is law in Stó:lō culture that a soul will not rest unless efforts are made to find human remains and it is buried properly.⁴¹⁰ He stated that “their spirit will wander if there is no resting place given to them. When fighting in Wars, you always

Affairs (Indian Affairs Branch or IAB after 1936).” (11). Representations of the “administrative Indian” are largely found in Indian Affairs files but particularly internal memos, for “such correspondence [such as Archie’s military records] was less likely to be guarded than public-policy statements.” (12)

⁴⁰⁹ According to his attestation papers, Noel Seymour lived at 637 Powell Street, Vancouver. He was born in Agassiz. He enlisted on March 3, 1917. He was born on 19/10/1887.

⁴¹⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 30, 2003.

have to bury the dead.”⁴¹¹ In 1918, when Noel Seymour died overseas his bones were not repatriated. Archie said that ‘this was very bad.’⁴¹² Archie also indicated that no one ever talked about how his grandfather died overseas:

All I seen was the letter you got when a person dies over there. My dad had it for a long time, it must have got thrown away, my grandmother got a pension. It wasn’t much, but in them days whatever money you got was better than nothing.⁴¹³

The receipt of pension was notable, considering in terms of policy “during the Depression of the 1930s, status Indian veterans were denied access to special relief measures for Great War veterans because it was thought that they were cared for by the Department of Indian Affairs, despite the fact that Indian Affairs’ levels of support were much lower.”⁴¹⁴ While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the treatment of WWI veterans, Archie’s recollections in our initial meeting provide a context for our future discussions and illustrate the history of military participation in his family that no doubt influenced his enlistment in WWII as well as that of his half-brother, Joe Gabriel and adopted brother, Stanley “Moody” Michelle.

At the time of his enlistment, Archie was a young man following in the footsteps of his father Dave Charles, working as a chokerman and boom-man in the logging industry. As Keith Carlson observes: “The factors which motivated individual *Stó:lō* people to enlist were just as

⁴¹¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 11, 2003.

⁴¹² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 30, 2003.

⁴¹³ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴¹⁴ R. Scott Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation: Aboriginal People in Canadian Military Practice 1900-1945,” *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives*, edited by P. Whitney Lakenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle (Kingston: Canadian Defense Academy Press, 2007), 57-71, 64.

varied and complex as those which had influenced men like Tecumseh two hundred years earlier.”⁴¹⁵ Archie described the circumstances of his enlistment in an interview:

In my time, there was conscription. It was better to volunteer than to let them drag you away. Then you had a choice of where to go. So I chose Prince Albert as my training centre. I'd never been to Prince Albert, but I heard a lot about it. So there were four of us that said we were going to join, and I happened to be the only one that passed the exam.⁴¹⁶

Carlson notes: “...commonly, *Stó:lō* veterans mentioned that they were led to believe that if they did not enlist on their own they would inevitably be drafted....Because they were not even aware that they had the option of not serving in the military they were effectively denied their rights in more ways than one.”⁴¹⁷ Archie further described his voluntary enlistment to me:

They were conscripting right off the street, so instead of letting them grab me, we - a bunch of us from north Cowichan Lake, we were working up there, and we said ‘let’s go get tested and see who goes and who doesn’t’, [I] passed and the rest went back to work, so that broke up that thing!⁴¹⁸

Beyond the inconsistent application of military policy and procedure on Aboriginal enlistment and training in WWII, factors unique to British Columbia had a direct impact on *Stó:lō* and other First Nations recruits from the Province. In British Columbia the majority of Aboriginal people, including the *Stó:lō*, have not signed treaties, meaning that “Aboriginal people living in British Columbia, by the court’s definition, should have been included in those groups exempted from military service.”⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ Carlson, *Witness*, 131.

⁴¹⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴¹⁷ Carlson, *Witness*, 131.

⁴¹⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 28, 2009.

⁴¹⁹ Carlson, *Witness*, 130.

Racial and Institutional Politics Involved in Aboriginal WWII Army Enlistment

Scott Sheffield describes how:

Numerous other recommendations for differentiated service developed during the first years of the war...none of these came to fruition because of the reticence within the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), which felt that from ‘the standpoint of the Indian himself and the effectiveness of his service in the Armed Forces, we are not all that sure an Indian Battalion would be of much value.’⁴²⁰

Much like his institutionalization at residential school, Archie recalled that he and other Stó:lō recruits including Pete Peters and Oliver Peters were separated from one another. “We all went in the army at the same time, a bunch of us, then they divided us up, ‘you go there, you go over there’ they said.”⁴²¹ “I don’t think they wanted to put us all together anyways. I don’t know what the reason was. They musta had some kind of reason....”⁴²² According to Sheffield, in Canada, “By process of elimination, and perhaps preference, the vast majority of First Nations men served in the Canadian Army...A disinterest in racially segregated units remained clear: military authorities seriously contemplated no scheme for segregated service.”⁴²³ While the official policy may have been such that racially segregated units were simply not considered advantageous, Archie’s perception of the separation of Stó:lō and First Nations recruits highlighted the continuity of assimilationist policies (namely via the residential school experience) he had encountered throughout his young life to that point:

Uh, well, where I went to school they tried to kill the language...there were a few Stó:lō, Thompson, Okanagan, Shuswap and they mixed us all up so we couldn’t talk in our lingo, or tell secrets or something. They tried hard to break us. Yeah, you couldn’t say

⁴²⁰ Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation”, 65.

⁴²¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁴²² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴²³ Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation”, 66.

no when they got you on the street. They put you on the streetcar and took you up to Little Mountain, that's where the barracks was.⁴²⁴

It is not surprising that a disparity exists between official military policy and the perception of Aboriginal recruits like Archie regarding the reasons for not pursuing racially segregated units. Sheffield stresses that "it is important to separate assimilation in Canadian military practice from that more common and problematic perspective. All Western military establishments require assimilative conditioning to weld the disparate human material they recruit into a functional unified entity."⁴²⁵

While the Army had no overarching barrier to Indigenous enlistment, it did not actively seek First Nations or Métis to fill its ranks. Sheffield's research indicates that, as WWII progressed, "each branch of the service developed its own distinctive policies regarding the recruiting and service of non-Europeans generally, and in some cases, of Aboriginal people specifically."⁴²⁶ His research further reveals how:

At a broad institutional level, however, Aboriginal men were not excluded. ...Nevertheless there was some exclusion at the individual and subordinate levels. ...As the largest service with the greatest demand for personnel, the army was too desperate to be overly selective with their recruiting efforts. Indeed, at least 4,000 status Indians and a number of Metis and non-Status Indians served in the army."⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough March 12, 2009.

⁴²⁵ Sheffield, "Indifference, Difference and Assimilation", 69.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 65. More specifically, "The RCAF maintained its racial barrier for recruiting into the Fall of 1942 before it was dropped. Regardless of this newfound willingness to accept Aboriginal recruits, the RCAF proved a difficult service for them to enter because it had the highest requirements for education and health. Both of these proved problematic for the majority of young Aboriginal people because of the inadequacies in Indian education and health services during the interwar years. Very few Aboriginal men therefore joined the Air Force... The case of the RCN was more clear-cut: its policy was exclusion. The RCN, like Britain's Royal Navy, maintained a 'colour-line' that required all potential recruits to be "of pure European decent and of the White Race." (Sheffield, "Indifference, Difference and Assimilation", 65-66).

⁴²⁷ Sheffield, "Indifference, Difference and Assimilation," 66.

However, throughout the entire WWII conflict, “it remained an unwritten rule that Aboriginal people were not welcome in any branch of the armed forces except the army.”⁴²⁸ The construction and propagation of what Sheffield refers to as the “administrative Indian” is apparent in the 1944 edition of the *Army Recruiting Manual*, which included special instructions for the “enlistment of all Indians and Half Breeds.” The Manual states:

Care should be taken when accepting applications from or approaching Indians as prospective recruits. Here education standards are strictly adhered to. Experience has shown that they cannot stand the long periods of confinement, discipline and strenuous physical and nervous demand incidental to modern army routine. On the other hand, some very fine Indians have been enlisted, but these are usually persons who have had their schooling and training in an Indian Residential school.⁴²⁹

Not only were Native recruits subject to institutional prejudice when enlisting, more broadly, Sheffield argues Aboriginal peoples were “victims of government policies that were ‘dominated by indecision, bureaucratic bungling and short-sighted decision making.’”⁴³⁰

Once Archie had enlisted in the army, he was sent in extraordinarily swift fashion to training camp, with restricted access to outside communication, a procedure similarly experienced and recalled by Stó:lō Veteran Wes Sam: “the army accepted me so fast I never even got to go home and visit my family – straight to the barracks.”⁴³¹ Archie recalled to me a

⁴²⁸ Sheffield, *On the Warpath*, 28-30.

⁴²⁹ *Shoulder to Shoulder: Information for Recruiting Personnel and Civilian Recruiting Advisors*, 1944, 113.3A2009/D2 DHH, in Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation”, 68.

⁴³⁰ R. Scott Sheffield “...*In the Same Manner as Other People*’: *Government Policy and the Military Service of Canada’s First Nations People, 1939-1945*.” MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1995: 63, cited in Sheffield and Lakenbauer, “Moving Beyond ‘Forgotten’”, 220.

⁴³¹ Wes Sam Interview in Carlson, *Witness*, 131.

similarly expedited process as described by Wes Sam and how his family reacted to his enlistment, especially given they were not aware of it at the time:

Well, I had to send my clothes home, so they must have wondered what for. In them days, everybody wore suit and tie and all that garbage. They thought I had got killed or something! [laughs] They thought I was in the [logging] camp still. Well, I was in camp, but a different kind of a camp.⁴³²

Archie described the training camp he was initially sent to upon enlistment:

Oh, well it was sort of a jail like place, too. You couldn't phone or anything. They sorta didn't want people to know how many soldiers they had around British Columbia. I guess there were a lot of spies or whatever around, passing the word. But I didn't mind it, after a week or so...⁴³³

Archie's family's response seems to have been one of ambivalence or passive resistance:

"They sort of left it up to me, but they didn't like it really. What's the use of fighting, if you lost it [the War] anyway? That's their attitude, and I don't blame them for it..."⁴³⁴

The response of Archie's family to his enlistment provides insight into personal and cultural perceptions of joining the service. As Carlson's work suggests, the fact that Archie's family "didn't really like" the idea of his enlistment is at least partially due to the fact that often, once enlisted, soldiers were expected to live up to the role that carried a certain stigma within Stó:lō society (that of "warrior"). As Wayne Suttles described: "[a] warrior was a man who had acquired a vision power of a special class that made him dangerous, even to his own people. His vision power might command him to test his strength by leading a raid on some villiage for which any pretext for attack might be found."⁴³⁵ As such, in the nineteenth century, *stomex*

⁴³² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 28, 2008.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski June 3, 1994.

⁴³⁵ Suttles in Morag, *Fort Langley*, 199.

warriors, it seems, were feared as much as they were respected. Carlson argues that returning Stó:lō veterans were not necessarily regarded as modern-day *stomex* warriors, but that they do need to be perceived within a cultural context that is informed by historical understandings of *stomex* warriors. That is to say, for the Stó:lō people who did not go away to serve in the military, it was difficult to appreciate the motives of the young Stó:lō men who enlisted to fight against Germans as who had not necessarily done anything to insult or injure the Stó:lō communities directly. Within the context of this historical legacy, the role of “warrior/soldier,” was in opposition to the respected role of *Siyá:m*, or one who leads through peaceful methods. Rather than increasing their status in Stó:lō society, Stó:lō soldiers were often regarded with suspicion or even fear by many Stó:lō civilians upon their return from overseas.

Archie’s attestation records⁴³⁶ indicate he signed his enlistment papers and was accepted for service May 11, 1942, in Chilliwack, B.C. and completed basic training for infantry in New Westminster in 1942.⁴³⁷ Records further indicate that Archie attended reserve-force training camp in Vernon, B.C., from July 19 to November 2, 1942.⁴³⁸ Stó:lō veteran Wes Sam describes his older brother’s experience at the same training camp Archie attended in Vernon: “He spent four months there. He said they wouldn’t let you out. All the time you were there they wouldn’t give you weekend leave or anything like that.”⁴³⁹ At the time of his enlistment, Archie was in a common-law relationship with Mary “Mamie” Cecelia Elizabeth Crey, a Stó:lō woman from the nearby Chawathil Reserve. While genealogical records held at the Stó:lō Nation office indicate

⁴³⁶ Archibald Charles, Attestation of Non-Permanent Active Militia of Canada Record May 11, 1942.

⁴³⁷ Archibald Charles, Canadian Army Enrollment and Attestation Paper March 18, 1944.

⁴³⁸ Archibald Charles, Canadian Army Statement of Services.

⁴³⁹ Wes Sam Interview in Carlson, *Witness*, 132.

they were married in about 1941,⁴⁴⁰ family members remember them as having been common-law.⁴⁴¹ In 1941, Archie's son, little John Edward "Eddy" Charles had been born. He was Archie's first biological child and the little boy was the spitting image of his father.

A key policy development proved to have a significant impact on the recruitment and training of Aboriginal soldiers. In "August 1940, the Canadian Parliament passed *The National Mobilization Act*. This legislation required all adult Canadians to register for potential military service... Registration also required men to serve one month of basic training with their 'Home militia.'"⁴⁴² In January 1941, the *National Resources Mobilization Act* extended the mandatory training period from 30 days to four months. After completing training, men automatically became part of the "Home Service Militia."⁴⁴³ However, "even though they did not have any of the privileges of citizenship...many Aboriginal people had been compelled to complete the 30 day basic training as though they were Canadian citizens."⁴⁴⁴ Archie described the sentry duties he fulfilled including monitoring internment camps prior to going overseas:

They [the army] had homeguard, 15 or 16 of them right as a reserve here, what they called 'Saturday Night Soldiers' – they trained one day a week! They brought prisoners back from overseas or guarded camp or guarded the town or whatever close-by. In Alberta, well, they had a Japanese camp, above Hope on the Hope-Princeton trail, near the highway there. Yeah, I lived with some of those guys, they lived here their whole life – it was like a concentration camp.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁰ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Archibald Charles November 13, 1994.

⁴⁴¹ Caroline Credico and Tina Jack informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, January 22, 2013.

⁴⁴² Carlson, *Witness*, 128.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, 129.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

While Archie was still on home soil, in 1943, tragedy struck when his son “Eddy” died in a house fire. He was only two years old. Archie told me on many occasions about little Eddy’s passing, though in what I would come to understand as typical of how Archie framed what could be viewed as traumatic experiences he would state the event but not go into detail or describe his emotions at length. That being said, the gravity of the loss of Eddy was always palpable and Eddy’s photograph included here is one that featured prominently on the wall of family photographs in his kitchen. (see **Figure 4.1**)

Military records dated May 25, 1944 in Prince Albert, S.K., describe Archie’s abilities in the following way: “A self-confident Indian who says he is getting along well with his training. Is having no difficulty learning the drill or class room subjects. Basic training completed. Suitable for Advanced training in C.I.C. (Rifle)...Charles should do good service.”⁴⁴⁶ Archie recalled his training experience: “I spent six months in Prince Albert, then Shiloh, Manitoba. I done my basic in Prince Albert and my advanced in Camp Shiloh, Manitoba...I took infantry. I don’t have much schooling anyway and I couldn’t go into paratroops; I was scared of heights you know. I think I could have managed it, but...”⁴⁴⁷ Archie recollected he was in awe of the sheer number of military people in camp. He adds: “Manitoba – Shiloh. Wow, it was a big camp – every part of the army was there – artillery, engineers, even the Watch⁴⁴⁸ were there. I was in the infantry and they had drivers and everything else training there. A large camp...”⁴⁴⁹ Archie described the sense of adventure he felt as a result of his new experience and his travels.

⁴⁴⁶ Captain B.B. Beaver, Prince Albert Sask May 25 1944.

⁴⁴⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴⁴⁸ The Watch refers to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada.

⁴⁴⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough June 28, 2008.

This reaction is evident in his description of taking the train from Agassiz, B.C., to Prince Albert, SK, in order to take basic training. From Prince Albert, he travelled by train once again to Shiloh, for his advanced training. Once he was chosen to go to war, he travelled by steam engine train from Shiloh all the way to Halifax, Nova Scotia. He described to me on one occasion how he revelled in the spiral tunnel as the train circled around and around through the Rockies making its way east.⁴⁵⁰ On another occasion, Archie recounted a humorous story about his adventure while on this train ride east, where he was to be deployed to England; he said that when the train made a routine stop, he jumped off to try to acquire cigarettes and whisky and almost missed the train as it started back up. “I woulda had smokes and nothing else!”⁴⁵¹

Archie’s Experience in Europe

Archie boarded the *RMS Aquitania*⁴⁵² and arrived overseas in April of 1945 at a crucial time in the War, given that “[t]he peak strength of the Canadian Army overseas was reached during March, 1945.”⁴⁵³ According to sources, Archie was one of “more than 100 young *Stó:lō* men and at least one *Stó:lō* woman who served in the Canadian military during WWII.”⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 15, 2007 (unrecorded).

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² As leading Canadian military historian and former Colonel C.P. Stacey writes; “(t)he movement of Canadian soldiers to Britain began in earnest on 10 December 1939, when convoy T.C.1, comprising the *Aquitania*, *Duchess of Bedford*, *Empress of Australia*, *Empress of Britain*, and *Monarch of Bermuda*, carried 7449 officers and men of the 1st Division out of Halifax harbour. From 4 November 1939 to 8 May 1945 some 368,000 men and women of the Canadian Army crossed the North Atlantic in more than 300 ship sailings...” C.P. Stacey. *The Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War Volume 1* (Published by Authority of the Minister of National Defence, Ottawa: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1955), 189.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, 191

⁴⁵⁴ Carlson, *Witness*, 131.

Though not fighting side by side, among this group was Archie's childhood friend Pete Peters from Seabird Island. (see **Figure 4.2**) In addition to being a son, bereaved father and husband, Archie now fully embodied the identity of Private Soldier K-2832 of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Archie's attestation papers state the date of commencement of his active service as March 18, 1944.⁴⁵⁵ Following his time spent in basic and advanced training on home soil, he served overseas from April 13, 1945 to July 17, 1945.⁴⁵⁶ Meanwhile,

(i)n late March, as other Allied armies crossed the Rhine into Germany, the First Canadian Army began rooting out German forces in the remainder of the Netherlands. The Canadians faced stiff fighting in places, and were also hampered by the broken roads, bridges and other infrastructure destroyed by the fleeing Germans, who blew up some of the dykes in the western Netherlands, flooding parts of the countryside.⁴⁵⁷

While Archie tended not to provide specific place names or dates in his reminiscence of his time overseas, he recalled how he served as part of the "Army of Occupation. We were shipped right into Holland and Belgium, we went to England first. I didn't get into France at all."⁴⁵⁸ Archie's first stop in Europe was Dover, England, and he recalled, "the hardest thing when you went to England was to learn their money."⁴⁵⁹ In April 1945, the PPCLI "made its way to Boisschot, Belgium. Following eleven days of light activity, the Regiment was again on the move with 1st Canadian Division to liberate Holland, and on April 11th, co-leading the divisional crossing of the Ijssel River, they played an important part in the capture of

⁴⁵⁵ "March 18th 1944" - stated in Archibald Charles's Application for War Service Gratuity August 24, 1946.

⁴⁵⁶ Archibald Charles PTE K2832, "War Services Grants Act, 1944 Certificate of Service". Archie states in Ed Labinski Interview, June 3, 1994, that it was "end of 1944, somewhere in there".

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/liberation-of-holland/> (download date February 2, 2015)

⁴⁵⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

Appeldoorn.”⁴⁶⁰ Archie travelled “from Dover to Holland, joining the Canadian Scottish Garrison Bn in NWE [Northwest Europe] in May 1945.”⁴⁶¹ He recalled with a laugh “‘The Cooks Tour’! That’s what they called it: you go from one place to the other!”⁴⁶² During this time,

(t)he Canadians were greeted as heroes as they liberated small towns and major cities, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Millions of Dutch had suffered terribly during the harsh ‘hunger winter’ of 1945, and Canadian troops facilitated the arrival of food, fuel and other aid supplies to a population in the midst of starvation.⁴⁶³

Archie described a typical day: “We had to walk and walk and walk. We would walk 25 miles a day or whatever. Full pack, too! (laughs) Yeah...I guess it was for our own good, anyway. You had to act on command all the time.”⁴⁶⁴ Archie was charged with guarding concentration camps⁴⁶⁵, on which he reflected: “I can’t even pronounce the name of that place. There was no building anyways, just fence and tents. [The buildings], they just blew them right off the map. But Amsterdam stayed perfect; the outskirts were kind of bombed.”⁴⁶⁶

Archie also recalled that he and other soldiers had very little knowledge of what the Germans were doing to the Jewish people in WWII, stating they knew “nothing, but after we got over there we heard all about it. We didn’t even know about that. All they taught us was what

⁴⁶⁰ Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry *Regimental Manual* “Chapter Two History, Heritage and Traditions.” (Calgary, Alta.: Regimental Executive Committee), 1969, 6.

⁴⁶¹ Captain B.B. Beaver Report on Archie Charles, Prince Albert, SK, May 25, 1944.

⁴⁶² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴⁶³ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/liberation-of-holland/> (download date February 2, 2015)

⁴⁶⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 28, 2009.

⁴⁶⁵ Archie did not provide Labinski or me with specific names of camps, nor were these names referenced in his military records.

⁴⁶⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

we was supposed to know about fighting, that's it, obey orders.”⁴⁶⁷ Of his preparedness for service he remarks: “There are a lot of things they didn't teach you in basic or advanced training. After you get over there you learned it on your own, anyway, what you needed to survive.”⁴⁶⁸

Archie's reflections and interpretation of the motives and conduct of non-Stó:lō cultural “others” provides valuable insight into the consequent impact his military participation had on his personal, social and cultural life in both war and peacetime. The following recollection Archie shared about the Germans illustrates the ongoing formation at a young age of the empathy he demonstrated for all people:

I guess it was most clear that it was the Americans they didn't like... One thing I know, they didn't have no clothing. What they did have was all tattered and torn. Nobody issued them anything. Those that worked took some [clothes] out to work, they cleaned up somewhere, they had overalls, fatigues they used to call them, with this great big letter in the back. It made me wonder why they did that [started the War]. They took on the world. They picked out the small ones [countries] first, then forced them to fight with them...⁴⁶⁹

Displaying similar compassion towards the Jewish people, he remarked:

They lost everything, the resources. Here you can have timber, or here you can have fish. They put their thumbs down and you were under it and that's what it was. That's why I say when we went in there, we were equal. This Sergeant got a little bit more money, just ten cents a day.⁴⁷⁰

He remarked how his assumptions about *Xwelítem* people, British in particular, were challenged overseas when he saw English people living in poverty or being unable to own their own property and house:

A lot of us soldiers stayed in there you know, in case – prepared for anything, or everything. And I never thought that the Indian was even. Because I thought all

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

white people were Brits and owned everything – and a lot of them didn't have anything! They were just paying rent. And they would say 'oh how lucky you are! You have land and homes and property and all that.'⁴⁷¹

The Princess Patricia's *Regimental Manual* notes that "(t)he Patricia's, having stood fast in Barneveld, were on hand as security and logistical organizers for the historic Achterveld conference between the Allies and the Germans April 30th. Victory in Europe (VE) was 5 May 1945."⁴⁷² Furthermore, "on 7 May, L Col Clark and his Patricia's were the first Allies in Amsterdam."⁴⁷³ The historical record states that "General Charles Foulkes, commander of the 1st Canadian Corps, accepted the surrender of German forces in the Netherlands on 5 May. Two days later, Germany formally surrendered and the war in Europe came to an end."⁴⁷⁴ At the time Archie was no doubt unaware of significance of the contribution made by him and other servicemen. However, the "liberation of Holland by Canadians, from September 1944 to April 1945, played a critical part in Allied victory of May 5, 1945. Canada's contributions saved the Dutch people from years of suffering and starvation under German occupation and created a lasting bond between the two countries."⁴⁷⁵

Upon his return to Canada, Archie was keen to re-enlist for active duty. A 1945 military appraisal record states that Archie: "is an Indian who...seems quite sincere in his intentions for volunteering in the Far East...Friendly and affable. Charles should do good service."⁴⁷⁶ He

⁴⁷¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴⁷² Regimental Executive Committee, *Regimental Manual*, 6.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/liberation-of-holland/> (download date February 2, 2015)

⁴⁷⁵ <http://ppcli.com/> (download date February 2, 2015)

⁴⁷⁶ Archibald Charles, Army Appraisal, May 25, 1945.

described how some Stó:lō men had earlier volunteered for the American Army in order to get to the Pacific:

You know some of them boys that were turned down here in Canada, went across the border and they took them right there. I had a brother who went over there. Moody Michelle, he's Chehalis. We grew up together, raised by the same family. He was turned down, so he went across the border [to the United States] and they took him.⁴⁷⁷

In an interview with Ed Labinski in 1994, as part of the Stó:lō veterans project, Mr. Michelle describes how he was living in Seattle when he volunteered for active service in the United States Armed Forces. He was 17, which was underage.⁴⁷⁸

Sources indicate that Moody Michelle was not alone, as “at least four Stó:lō men were enlisted in the United States Armed Forces during WWII. Apparently, those who joined the U.S. services did so because they were living in the States engaging in a modified version of their traditional seasonal rounds at that time.”⁴⁷⁹ While Archie sought re-enlistment for active service with the Canadian army to go to the South Pacific, ultimately he did not go⁴⁸⁰ “I was going into the American Army to volunteer for the South Pacific but when I got there it was all over.”⁴⁸¹ Archie was discharged August 24, 1946 having completed 890 days of active service.⁴⁸² His discharge records indicate his intent to resume logging.⁴⁸³ Archie recalled his first job upon

⁴⁷⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴⁷⁸ Stanley “Moody” Michelle, interview with Ed Labinski, June 1, 1994.

⁴⁷⁹ Carlson, *Witness*, 138.

⁴⁸⁰ Archibald Charles, Canadian Army Supplementary Declaration of Service in Pacific Theatre, May 17, 1945.

⁴⁸¹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴⁸² Archibald Charles, Computation of Service War Service Grant, October 24, 1946.

⁴⁸³ Archibald Charles, Canadian Army Discharge Certificate, August 24, 1946.

return to civilian life: “Mmm... (pausing), logging camp, I guess. Drove from here [Seabird Island] every morning in a taxi.”⁴⁸⁴

The motivation for some Stó:lō veterans such as Archie to seek re-enlistment becomes more understandable when their personal interpretation of their military participation is analyzed. For Archie and other Native vets, their military service (particularly overseas), while filled with the challenge and hardships of war, was also a time of freedom, adventure and racial equality unparalleled in their lives back home. When I asked Archie what the most important things he learned during his military service were, he described the equality he felt: “We all lived alike – no one was better than the other. We ate the same food, slept all in one big bunkhouse, everybody was equal. That’s the way I found it, anyway.”⁴⁸⁵ He carried the powerful feelings of acceptance and equality back to his civilian life: “Well, I took everybody as an equal you know– which we are, just the language changes.”⁴⁸⁶ He further describes the racial equality experienced overseas and the letdown upon his return:

One thing about it, you were treated equal that was the best thing that came about: everyone had the same amount of pay, the same rations, the same everything. There was no second or third class or whatever. They [civilians] look at Indians as the bottom of the scale, but there [the Army] you worked your way up: they treated you all the same. I was allowed to vote at that time; I was allowed into beer parlours, you name it because we were treated equal. Colour doesn’t mean a damn thing in there.⁴⁸⁷

And yet, as Sheffield notes, the contextually limited experience of equality Archie had enjoyed while in the service was not, unfortunately the reality of many Aboriginal veterans upon their return: “For many Aboriginal veterans, their service during the Second World War would

⁴⁸⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁴⁸⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

be remembered as the first, and sadly, the last time in their lives when they felt accepted and respected for their abilities on an equal basis to ‘White’ men and women.”⁴⁸⁸ For Archie, while serving in the military had its hardships, it also provided a sense of adventure and opportunity to see the world. As he recalled: “It’s a great life for a single person, to see the world, or part of it, anyways, at the government’s expense.”⁴⁸⁹ Many of the stories and memories Archie chose to share reflected this sense of adventure and intrigue. He and other Stó:lō veterans describe playing poker,⁴⁹⁰ drinking beer, figuring out new currency, trying new foods: “In England it was mutton this, mutton that.”⁴⁹¹ On one occasion we sat together, reviewing old photos, and we came across a picture of him in his youth, drinking whisky. (see **Figure 4.3**) Archie asserted that the photo was taken in the 1940s, just prior to him going overseas. Having only known Archie as a non-drinker, I laughed and remarked, “That’s a strange sight to see you drinking.” He laughed, saying he eventually quit drinking because “I did enough of it over there [in Europe]!”⁴⁹²

One of Archie’s favourite stories, delivered with his usual gentle humour, was in reference to intimate relationships men had with women overseas. “There’s no more Germans, they’re all half Canadian”⁴⁹³ and “(t)he Army don’t have to go to Europe anymore, just send the uniforms!” (the implication being that the children produced from relationships between servicemen and women from the local population would constitute their own army). Archie

⁴⁸⁸ Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation”, 69.

⁴⁸⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴⁹⁰ Discussed in detail in Ed Labinski Interviews with Archie Charles, “Moody” Michelle and other Stó:lō Veterans.

⁴⁹¹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁴⁹² Archie Charles, interview Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁴⁹³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, December 10, 2008 (unrecorded).

would refer to these sorts of humorous statements as “zingers” and instructed me explicitly to “put those ones in the book!!”⁴⁹⁴

Archie’s recollections of his experience overseas indicate that it allowed him to explore dimensions of his personal life and ideology free of judgement from family or the greater Stó:lō community and this freedom had an exceptional impact of his development. The cross-cultural relationships he formed with fellow servicemen and civilians (including women - though this was never made explicit, he does allude to it) and his lifestyle, which included drinking, smoking and gambling, no doubt informed his choices later in life. His exceptional compassion towards others who struggle with addiction or unhealthy lifestyle choices and his belief in cultural and social equality were strengthened as a result of his army experiences.

Return to Civilian Life: Re-negotiating Stó:lō Identity after WWII

Upon his return to civilian life, Archie found work logging once again, at times alongside his father Dave Charles. He worked in various camps throughout the British Columbia Lower Mainland as well as on Vancouver Island at a camp in Honeymoon Bay. Archie recalled that he enjoyed his time working alongside his father Dave Charles in the years following the war:

“Yeah. He had a herd of cattle. Like he held two jobs, worked on the railroad and he had his cows to look after. I mean there was no money in milk and stuff like that. Now it's like gold! [laughs]”⁴⁹⁵ Dave Charles’ resourcefulness clearly had an impact on Archie, who would maintain multiple forms of employment simultaneously throughout the rest of his work life.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

Zack Joe (*Nwéwtm*) recalled that after the war ended, that “Papa [Archie] also worked on the power lines clearing brush and trees. He never said how long he did this or what the pay was like. He did say that he worked from Merritt [British Columbia] through to Seabird [Island].”⁴⁹⁶

While he may have been able to find work, the transition back to civilian life was challenging for many Native veterans, including Stó:lō veterans like Archie. They faced limited public awareness of their contribution; unethical and prejudicial Government policies that restricted them as Canadian citizens (specifically in comparison to non-Native veterans); conflicted reception from their home communities, who - depending on their local cultural history - made meaning out of their military participation in diverse ways ranging from honour to rejection to apathy. As a result, this left many Stó:lō and other Native veterans “forgotten” both by their own people as well as overlooked and discriminated against by the public in the years following the War.

Given the divergent cultural role, responsibility and status of the *Siyá:m* and *stómex* in Stó:lō society, how did Archie reconcile and negotiate his war-time experience with Stó:lō and popular views of Aboriginal soldiers as warriors? Fifty years after Archie’s service, the commemoration of Stó:lō veterans would be initiated by the Stó:lō Nation and include the raising of a commemorative pole and the commencement of Remembrance Day Ceremonies that continue to this day. This shift in Stó:lō community response, inspired by the ways in which Stó:lō veterans proved themselves leaders in a traditional fashion over time, led to a reconciliation between the traditional views of the role of warriors and the recognition of the

⁴⁹⁶ Zack Joe, correspondence with Meagan Gough, March 17, 2015.

contribution of Stó:lō veterans. It also illustrates the continually evolving and innovative nature of Stó:lō culture, community and history.

In the middle of the 20th century, a considerable disparity existed between the experience of Native people and military personnel and stereotypes of what constituted authentic “Indianness”.⁴⁹⁷ Scott Sheffield finds that there was a striking dichotomy apparent in the mid-century image of the “popular” Indian:

Canadians’ notions of Aboriginal people included great warriors and vicious savages, Indian princesses and lascivious squaws, wise Elders and drunken vagabonds, and sometimes all of the above despite all the contradictions. Virtually all Canadians accepted the ‘truth’ that the Indian was a dying race, diminished in both numbers and vitality. Military officers reflected these diverse ideologies and carried them into their efforts to recruit, train and lead the country’s soldiers. What this meant for Aboriginal military service was a shifting contest between conflicting images of the indigene. On the one hand was the favourable impression of Aboriginal men as natural warriors, well prepared for soldiering by their racial attributes and wilderness skills; on the other the many negative views of a degraded and inferior race.⁴⁹⁸

In addition to depictions in newspapers, the mythical popular images of all Native soldiers as fierce fighters and warriors were ingrained in popular imagination and driven by Hollywood at the time of WWII. Archie’s reflections shed insight onto *Xwelítem* perspectives on Native people during wartime, but most significantly, highlight how he sought to maintain

⁴⁹⁷ Recent historical works seek to historicize the genesis of stereotypes of “Indianness” and consequently dismantle them. These works, many by Indigenous authors, add critical insight and perspective to the sustained impact of these ideologies on Native life. Some notable examples of this widening historiography include: in relation to military participation, Sheffield, *On the Warpath*; in pop culture imagery, Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press 1992); in film, Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); in humour, Anishnabe author Drew Hayden Taylor (ed), *Me Funny* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, 2005) *Me Sexy* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Press, 2008). See also *Reel Injun* (distributed by Mongrel Films, 2010) which critically examines the genesis of myths and stereotypes of the Hollywood Indian.

⁴⁹⁸ Sheffield, “Indifference, Difference and Assimilation”, 60-61.

and negotiate his cultural identity while completely immersed in a foreign cultural setting.

Despite his cultural background being distinct from those he encountered overseas, Archie fought to negotiate and maintain his cultural identity as a Stó:lō man in overt ways:

They asked over there, ‘what nationality are you?’[and] I tell them, ‘I’m an Indian.’ They don’t know what that was. The Dutch, Belgians, and Germans didn’t know what they [Indians] are. They figured we had feathers; that’s what they seen in the movies.⁴⁹⁹

As Archie did not have any other Stó:lō men in his unit, his experience involved being fully immersed in non-Stó:lō or *Xwelítem* culture, both within the military ranks and in his travels throughout Europe. Archie describes the role he played as a result of his cultural and racial attributes: “We [Stó:lō] were spread out all over – some went to Africa, Jamaica, Normandy, and I went with the Dutch. I was their mascot! Only dark one in the works! (laughs)”⁵⁰⁰ In his 1994 interview with Labinski, he describes his cross-cultural experience in the same way, stating he did not have any nicknames while in service, but that “I was their mascot, I was the only dark person in the platoon.”⁵⁰¹

In Archie’s experience, his self-described role as “mascot” was less pejoratively patronizing than the nicknames ascribed to some other Native servicemen. Such was the case with one Stó:lō veteran nicknamed “Tonto”, “the supposedly flattering nickname bestowed upon him by his non-Aboriginal ‘buddies’ in the army.”⁵⁰² As noted by Carlson, these stereotypes were very pervasive: “for most *Xwelítem* people, particularly military officials, every ‘Indian

⁴⁹⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵⁰⁰ Archie Charles, interview Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁵⁰¹ Archie Charles, interview Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵⁰² Carlson, *Witness*, 134. See also Labinski, interview with Archie Charles for more about Tonto’s story.

enlistee' was viewed as a potential warrior."⁵⁰³ Despite this being directly at odds with cultural values of Stó:lō servicemen, "Hollywood images seem to have been accepted as accurate ethnographic descriptions by the officials at the recruitment office. These officials assume that Aboriginal men's 'warrior' heritage would make them excellent soldiers."⁵⁰⁴

Archie's reflections about the popular appeal of the narrative of Cree Soldier Tommy Prince⁵⁰⁵ provides insight into his perception at the time of his service of the popular myth that presumed any Aboriginal soldier was a warrior: "They only wrote about one hero, that I can think of, Tommy Prince. He had medals upon medals. After he came home he was nothing."⁵⁰⁶ It was not only the public who carried deep-seated assumptions and prejudice regarding Native people, particularly soldiers: "The military establishment as well as other rank and file soldiers expected Aboriginal soldiers to be especially brave and adept at warfare."⁵⁰⁷ Carlson concludes that Stó:lō servicemen did not seek to embrace a public or Hollywood image of themselves as

⁵⁰³ Ibid, 133.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ In his 2010 article "A Hell of a Warrior": Remembering Sergeant Thomas George Prince", historian P. Whitney Lakenbauer explores the impact of popular notions of "warrior" on the life of Cree soldier Tommy Prince. He writes that "No one is more famous than Sergeant Thomas George Prince, M.M. (1915-77), one of the most decorated non-commissioned officers in Canadian military history. Awarded eleven medals in all, including the Military Medal and U.S. Silver Star, Prince is held up as the prime example of the important contributions that Native peoples made to the Canadian war efforts of the twentieth century: he is the quintessential "Indian at War". In biographical terms, his story is also tragic: that of an Aboriginal soldier whose commitment to his people and his country was never matched by his country's support for him. Overseas he was a bold, audacious, and courageous warrior. At home, he was a "fallen hero," fated to spend his final years as an alcoholic on the streets of Winnipeg." P. Whitney Lakenbauer, "A Hell of a Warrior": Remembering Sergeant Thomas George Prince," *Journal of Historical Biography* (Spring 2007): 26-79: 26.

⁵⁰⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵⁰⁷ Carlson, *Witness*, 133.

warriors: “none of the surviving Stó:lō veterans ever mentioned that they joined the army because they saw themselves as a ‘warrior’ or wanted to be a ‘warrior.’”⁵⁰⁸

Diversity in Community Response to WWII Veterans: Zuni and Navaho

Aboriginal community responses to their returning vets were as diverse and grounded in local cultural histories as the people themselves. While there still remains a gap in the available historiography of such perspectives,⁵⁰⁹ research conducted by anthropologists John Adair and Evon Vogt in 1949 highlighted the unique ways in which Zuni and Navajo WWII veterans reintegrated into civilian and community life. Based on field research recording the life histories of veterans in both communities, Vogt and Adair discovered that “although the veterans from the two tribes experienced the same range and kinds of cultural contact while they were in the armed forces, there were important differences in the meaning of this contact and in the ways that the Navaho and Zuni communities responded to the veterans at the end of the war.”⁵¹⁰ Adair and Vogt concluded that, for a number of reasons influenced by historical, cultural and social factors, “the Zuni responded with a ‘nativistic reaction’; going to great lengths to reabsorb their veterans into the traditional social and cultural forms, while their neighbouring Ramah Navaho have tended to regard their veterans as potential for change in the direction of white patterns of

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ While literature on the topic remains sparse, the novel *Three Day Road* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008) by Joseph Boyden makes a significant contribution. Inspired by the life of Francis Pegahmagabow, an Anishnabe sniper in World War One, *Three Day Road* chronicles the experience of two Cree soldiers serving in the Canadian Military in World War One and their reintegration into their community.

⁵¹⁰ John Adair and Evon Vogt, “Navajo and Zuni Veterans: A Study of Contrasting Modes of Culture Change,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 51, No 4, pt. 1 (Oct-Dec 1949), 547-561, 547.

culture.”⁵¹¹ The first sociocultural factor the authors point to is social organization, as “the foundation of Zuni society is the family.... life centres around the house”, whereas Navaho were widely spread geographically and therefore “[m]ost veterans returned from the war to take up residence in separate extended families and local groups that were far removed from their localized social units.”⁵¹² The second factor of influence assessed in the comparison of the two groups was the historical or traditional patterns of warfare in the two tribes. As Adair and Vogt observe, though less prevalent than within Plains communities,

[warfare was] an important feature of Navaho life, especially after the introduction of the horse. The Zuni participated in war only when attacked, and whereas the success of Zuni war parties was believed to depend largely upon the prayers of the priests who stayed at home, Navaho war and raiding parties depended more upon individual warriors and ceremonial practitioners who went along.⁵¹³

Furthermore, it followed that “individual Zuni warriors enjoyed little prestige, but that Navaho warriors obtained a good deal of prestige for their raiding exploits especially insofar as they added horses, food, and other economic goods to the tribe....Navaho warfare persisted until the 1860s while the Zuni have done little fighting in the past 150 years.”⁵¹⁴

Finally, Adair and Vogt argue that “the long Navaho experience of travel and mobility as contrasted with the long Zuni experience of immobility”⁵¹⁵ similarly shaped community response to returning vets. As a result, the authors concluded, “Navaho veterans tended to be regarded as returning warriors in the traditional sense and that this is one factor in their being placed in socially valued roles in Navaho society....the Zuni, on the other hand, did not look upon war as

⁵¹¹ Adair and Vogt, “Navajo and Zuni Veterans”, 554-555.

⁵¹² Adair and Vogt, “Navajo and Zuni Veterans”, 558.

⁵¹³ Ibid, 559.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

any concern of theirs.”⁵¹⁶ As a result of these factors, Vogt and Adair conclude that “The Navaho veterans have tended to be regarded as potential forces for constructive change.”⁵¹⁷

Such distinct community response encourages discussion of the social, cultural and economic factors that influence cultural perspectives on warfare and how these perspectives change over time. Through a comparison of Zuni, Navaho and Stó:lō, it would appear that Stó:lō response to WWII veterans in the first half of the century were similar to that of the Zuni: apathetic, if not suspicious. However, fifty years later, the commemoration of Stó:lō veterans would take place, initiated by the Stó:lō Tribal Council, a commemoration that would include the raising of a commemorative pole and commencement of Remembrance Day ceremonies that continue to this day.

Stó:lō Community Response to WWII Vets: Tension Between Stó:lō Traditional Warrior and Contemporary Soldier

In comparison to other First Nations communities which elevated the status of their warriors, Stó:lō servicemen were required to be highly adaptable to embrace the violence of war, for “...in *Stó:lō* society, the most highly respected people are known as *siyá:m*. By definition a *Siyá:m* is wise and gentle. Traditionally, violence was a last resort if all other avenues of dispute resolution failed, and even then, it tended to be defensive rather than offensive.”⁵¹⁸ Furthermore,

a *Siyá:m* was not a warrior, but a diplomat. By way of contrast, warriors in traditional Stó:lō society were referred to as ‘*stómex*’, a term that implies ‘short tempered and likes to fight.’ *Stómex* people were aggressive. If *stómex* warriors received any respect from

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Adair and Vogt, “Navajo and Zuni Veterans”, 547.

⁵¹⁸ Carlson, *Witness*, 133.

the community, it derived from the fear they instilled in people. To the extent that they helped defend their families through raiding other villages, they were appreciated.⁵¹⁹

Archie described his *stómex* actions in wartime in no uncertain terms. When I asked him “What did they train you to do in the army?”, still using his characteristic soft voice and slow cadence, Archie paused, lowered his voice and replied: “How to kill people!”⁵²⁰ This statement was followed by Archie’s almost incredulous laugh. Knowing Archie as I did, as a successful leader and mediator of his family, caretaker of his hereditary fishcamp, one who wholeheartedly embodies the qualities of a *Siyá:m* - hearing him speak those words was shocking. Yet his directness reflects the decisiveness, confidence to act and acceptance of authority demanded of him while in the army – experiences he combined with his traditional and familial teachings to go on to be one of the most successful and highly regarded leaders of his generation. Carlson notes that “many *Stó:lō* veterans...found themselves ostracized by the community members of their home villages because they were seen as having rejected their *Stó:lō* culture when they joined the army. They were criticized for having tried to ‘become White.’”⁵²¹ As *Stó:lō* WWII Veteran Wes Sam describes:

When we returned home we were not accepted by the people in our own communities...They never liked us because they thought we were more systematic and thoughtful. The military trained us to think critically and accept discipline...the other *Stó:lō* people who stayed behind and didn’t enlist, well they thought we were strange because we were military-minded.⁵²²

Archie met with similar challenges upon his return to civilian life – his “military mindedness” proved to be out of step with community expectations of him. While he returned to

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, June 28, 2009.

⁵²¹ Carlson, *Witness*, 133.

⁵²² Wes Sam Interview in Carlson, *Witness*, 133.

work in the logging camps, he recalled: “You're just still...you're waiting for a command. You're waiting for - expecting somebody - to tell you what to do.”⁵²³ On another occasion, he described the value he perceived in the structure, order and authority in the military hierarchy, musing that such teachings could be useful for Stó:lō youth:

Ah, well, you get used to someone ordering you around, and when I got home there was no such thing, so it was back to the logging camp. It's a great thing, though...taught you to obey and give your Sergeant a message to carry to a higher authority. They watch you pretty close. Nowadays, kids, children don't listen to nobody, they go on their own.⁵²⁴

We can conclude then that, as Carlson notes “many [Stó:lō veterans] were criticized for acting too ‘white’ and thinking they were better than other Stó:lō on the one hand, and of acting too much like *stómex* on the other hand.”⁵²⁵

Narrative Style in Oral History Narratives of Archie and Other Veterans

What aspects of his military experience Archie chose to share with me and what he chose to omit raises interesting questions about both his narrative style and, more broadly, about the way in which individuals, and particularly veterans, frame and present their oral narratives, particularly to civilians. Anecdotally, historian Scott Sheffield told me⁵²⁶ that he found this to be the case in his work with veterans: humour was often used as a way to deliver a version of their experience that could be understood and appreciated by civilians without recollecting the horrors

⁵²³ Archie Charles, interview Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁵²⁴ Archie Charles, Interview Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁵²⁵ Carlson, *Witness*, 137.

⁵²⁶ R.Scott Sheffield, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, January 21, 2013.

of war or their actions.⁵²⁷ In his article “Interpreting a Vietnam Warfight: Changing Perspectives Over Time”, oral historian Fred H. Allison compares interviews with Vietnam vets done within hours of the event with interviews that recall their memories later in life. He finds that “contemporary combat interviews, done within hours of the event, although disjointed and narrowly detailed, are an accurate portrayal of what the individual experienced in combat.”⁵²⁸ The later interviews, he argues, reflect the narrator’s process of making sense of their experience: sorting it through their consequent life experiences, providing “context, drama, value, significance, and justification.”⁵²⁹ However, he concludes this type of censorship present in the later recollection of military memories undertaken by some veterans is “perhaps more understandable to those who are not ensconced in the event.”⁵³⁰

Archie’s recollections to me about his military experience tended to focus on his cross-cultural experience and perspectives on *Xwelítəm*, and he often used humour to describe his experiences. In the case of Archie’s narration of his military experience, there are a number of factors which inform how he recalled, framed and communicated his experience to me. As was the case in his recollections of his residential school experience, the version of the events of his military experience told to me was undoubtedly different from how he would describe those same events and trauma to someone who had shared that experience.

⁵²⁷ Humour as a component of veterans’ oral history narratives is included as a vital component in the “Veteran Voices of Pittsburgh Oral History Project” <http://thesocialvoiceproject.blogspot.ca/2012/02/new-oral-history-project-gives.html> (download date August 21, 2013).

⁵²⁸ Fred H. Allison, “A Vietnam War Fight: Changing Perspectives Over Time” In *The Oral History Reader*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 221-229, 228.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

As with other areas of his life story where gaps and silences were apparent, I sought to explore the “missing pieces” by engaging his family in oral history interviews with the intent of better understanding the nature of Archie’s omissions. Were the stories framed to cater to me as a civilian? Was it a reflection of what he chose to recall in the private or public realms? Was there a gendered dimension to the stories he recalled to me as a female? Was there a lingering cultural dimension to appearing *stómex*? Were there aspects of his experience we did not get to discuss due to lack of time? Archie spoke extensively about his time in the army with his great-grandson Zack Joe, who lived in the same house and shared a passion for the military. Zack recalled to me that “he never talked about what he did over there.” He further added that “he never talked about negative stories or anything like that.”⁵³¹ Archie’s quiet means of communicating experiences of stress or trauma likely shaped his omission of explicit stories of violence overseas. However silences like those Archie maintained were common among Stó:lō veterans according to Stó:lō community member Josephine Kelly who contributed to the Stó:lō veterans project: “very few of the veterans ever spoke about their experiences of the war. However, they do deserve recognition.”⁵³²

In his earlier interview with Ed Labinski, Archie provides an interesting point of reflection on dialogism and how the dynamics between speaker and listener affect how a narrator constructs and frames a version of their told-to narrative for a particular listener. My analysis of what information Archie shared with Ed Labinski in 1994 and subsequently with me (some 15 years later) is that there are certain key events and interpretations shared in our interviews. In

⁵³¹ Zack Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

⁵³² Josephine Kelly, interview with Pauline Joly de Lotbiniere, May 26, 1993. See: Pauline Joly de Lotbiniere, unpublished paper, *Report on the Research Conducted for the Stó:lō War Veterans Project*, 1993.

both our interviews, Archie omitted details of the violence of war, focusing more on how it shaped his values, particularly his cross-cultural relationships with and understandings of *Xwelítem*. For example, the way his military experience taught him to “act” with authority challenged his previous assumptions about non-Native people and his reflections of prejudicial treatment upon return to Canada. With Labinski, a male who had a focus on military history, he spoke in greater detail about the military itself and other Stó:lō veterans, whereas with me, he tended to focus on the adventure, the training, his interpretation of “the other” European people. When speaking with me, he also used humour more as a means of delivering his story. Analysis of his use of humour suggests a few possibilities: first, it could be attributed broadly to the filtering mechanism employed by veterans sharing their oral testimonies of war with non-veterans (for example, Labinski had a much broader understanding of military history and practice than I do). Or, perhaps, it was a reflection of the cultural use of humour by Stó:lō Elders, described by Jo-ann Archibald as a feature of communication where there is established ease, trust and rapport.

However, there did seem to be a gendered dimension to the stories Archie recalled to me. For example, while Archie had mentioned to me off hand telling a Sergeant “to get lost” one time overseas, his version of the story, when told to Zack Joe was more explicit. In this “male-to-male” narrative, Archie told Zack Joe about a Sergeant who was irritating him overseas. Archie’s response to the situation was more clearly delineated: Archie answered “Yes Sir, yes sir, up your ass sir” and punched him in the face. He got in trouble for it and had to do extra duties all day.⁵³³ The more detailed version recounted to Zack which included him swearing suggests that the

⁵³³ Zack Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

story was a modified “gendered” version constructed so as not offend me as a female.⁵³⁴ Perhaps lingering cultural notions of warrior or *stómex* behaviour as the antithesis of the cultural role of *Siyá:m* Archie so fully embodied influenced him in terms of how he framed the violence he would have witnessed and participated in overseas. While he recalled that the military “taught you to kill” he never spoke directly of any such actions. Similarly, he alluded to the romantic and sexual exploits servicemen had in his “zingers” though never making explicit his own actions.

What can be concluded is that Archie was generally quiet about his time spent overseas in his discussions with family and with civilians in general. When recounting his military stories he framed them in terms of anecdotes of humour, adventure and lessons learned, taking into account the background and gender of the listener in terms of how tame or detailed the story would be. A common thread in how Archie narrated his experience in his reminiscences shared with Zack and Ed Labinski was that he did not tend to provide specifics or extensive detail in terms of place names or dates overseas. One can only imagine that Archie would relate his memories to other veterans, particularly his fellow servicemen and siblings Joe Gabriel or Moody Michelle in a different manner.

⁵³⁴ Anthropologist Blanca Muratorio addresses the role her gender played in the listening dynamics between herself and Grandfather Alonso in *The Life and Times of Grandfather Alonso: History and Culture in the Upper Amazon*. New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, 1991. Because on certain topics “a woman would not have been ideal culturally as the primary Interviewer”, it was therefore appropriate for Muratorio to sit in on discussions between father and son, further “as an ethnographer and woman, this was precisely the role for her to play.” (7) She remarks of the project that “while this was an interaction between father and eldest son” (8), of importance is that “the irrevocable fact that I was there...cannot be ignored”, and in this way her presence impacted how the stories were told by Rucuyaya Alonso.(8) See also: Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini, Paul Richard Thompson (eds), *Gender and Memory*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

Stó:lō WWII Veterans as the Next Generation of Political Leaders

Archie drew insight and meaning from this military experience - both the good and the bad – that he utilized throughout the course of the rest of his life to strengthen his role as a leader in his community, especially in the political sphere. Archie reflected on how, when he returned, there was a modicum of regard for his service, but the discrimination he faced was still severe:

Well, we were honoured. But they still wouldn't take our children into white schools, or things like that, eh. You know, when I was in uniform, I would go to the beer parlour, join up with them in there. After I took my uniform off, I just became an Indian again.⁵³⁵

He further commented that: “After my discharge, I went right back, they took everything back...I had a hard time getting in the Legion here.”⁵³⁶ The incongruity of the treatment of Aboriginal veterans upon their return to civilian life is noted by historian J.R. Miller:

The Second World War seemed for a time to have blown apart Canadian Indian policy as the Allies crushed the Axis powers. There was a link between the two. After all, in the midst of a war against institutionalized racism and barbarity, it was impossible not to notice that the basis of Canadian Indian policy lay in assumptions about the moral and economic inferiority of particular racial groupings. The horrors of the war seriously discomfited Canadians when, on rare occasions, they looked at the way in which they treated the Aboriginal peoples of their country.⁵³⁷

Historian Robert Innes reflects that, generally,

...postwar news reports portrayed Aboriginal people in a more sympathetic light than the romanticized or negative image that characterized the pre-war news reports of Aboriginal people. Meanwhile, the attitudes of Canadians toward Aboriginal people changed in the postwar years. This change made it more conducive for Indians to form a well-publicized new political organization.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁵³⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵³⁷ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers*, 324.

⁵³⁸ Robert Alexander Innes “I’m On Home Ground Now, I’m Safe. Saskatchewan Aboriginal Veterans in the Immediate Post War Years 1945-1946,” *Aboriginal Peoples and Military Participation: Canadian and International Perspectives*, edited by P. Whitney Lakenbauer, R. Scott Sheffield, and Craig Leslie Mantle (2007), 69.

Archie maintained that there was a direct correlation between his military experience and his success later in his political life, and according to scholars he was not alone. In fact, many Aboriginal veterans, including those from the Stó:lō community, embarked on successful careers in politics. As Sheffield and Lackenbauer observe, “numerous Aboriginal veterans went on to become prominent political figures.”⁵³⁹

While his political leadership will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, Archie expressed during our interviews how his military experience directly shaped his later success as a political leader in a number of ways. The first was respect - not only to carry oneself with respect, but also to have a sense of compassion or respect for “the enemy.” I asked Archie if he believed his experience in the military gave him strengths that helped make him a political leader and he responded in the following way: “Respect was the one main objective. Respect for even those who lost the war – they were just fighting for their own, that’s the way I had it figured out.”⁵⁴⁰ He further described his interpretation of the perspective on the Germans in the war: “A lot of them [Germans] didn’t want to fight anyway. They had to [fight] or starve, I guess.”⁵⁴¹ Archie also mentioned that being in the military taught him to “act, not talk”, nurturing the quiet decisiveness reflected in the leadership characteristics of a *Siyá:m*.

In 1946, following the end of his military service, Archie would have a church wedding, marrying Susan Pat, daughter of George Pat Charlie. (see **Figure 4.4**) Throughout his re-integration into civilian life, Archie’s strong beliefs regarding work and contributing to family

⁵³⁹ Sheffield and Lackenbauer, “Moving Beyond ‘Forgotten’”, 225.

⁵⁴⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁵⁴¹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

and community, honed while in the military, became evident. In 1948, there was an historic flood in the Fraser Valley. The flood devastated places such as Chilliwack and surrounding rural area. (see **Figure 4.5**) Archie described the flood as “they had one bad one in 1894 that cut quite a bit off [of Seabird Island], but the 1948 one took over 1000 acres, we shrunk!”⁵⁴² He described how his military experience overseas shaped how he managed through the 1948 flood and thereafter: “... we all lived alike.... I found out we all had to work for the same thing – and if you don’t work you don’t eat! That’s one thing I found out. You have a job and you do it.”⁵⁴³

Archie described how a form of social assistance was introduced into his community back in 1948, in the form of seeds to plant and create a garden. He reflects on the transition from this type of social assistance to welfare and the ongoing implications it has had within his community:

In 1948, the year of the flood, they brought us seeds to plant and they didn’t give you cash, but they gave you seeds to plant and look after. And after that, they didn’t like delivering stuff I guess, it cost them too much, so they started handing out welfare, or social assistance. Welfare works in the city because they have no property, but not here, we have 4000 acres here and some of it’s doing nothing! One year, the river took off 1,100 acres and washed it all to Vancouver! I wonder what part of Vancouver got it? We’ll have to claim it! (laughing)⁵⁴⁴

Apparent in these comments is the continued evolution of Archie’s ethos and belief in self-sufficiency for himself and his community that he would carry with him into his later years as Chief. According to historian Robert Innes, the leadership skills and self-determination demonstrated by many returning Aboriginal veterans is a visible historical trend: “It has been accepted in the historical literature that a direct link existed between the participation of

⁵⁴² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough , March 12, 2009

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

Aboriginal people in the Second World War and the emergence of a new political consciousness among aboriginal people.”⁵⁴⁵ However, Innes’ work further highlights the need to fully consider the diverse regional, cultural, local and personal experiences of Native veterans. While Innes’s work maintains a regional focus on Saskatchewan, he argues that:

The claim that Indian leaderships emerged after the war ignores the efforts to advance Aboriginal rights prior to the war. Upon closer consideration, it is evident that very few of these organizations owe their formation to returning Aboriginal veterans. Rather, Aboriginal veterans had no direct influence in the creation of the new Indian organizations in Saskatchewan.⁵⁴⁶

Given the significance of the regional variation noted by Innes, it is important to note that in the case of the Stó:lō, and in Archie’s particular case, military experience directly impacted his political life and, more broadly, his leadership role within his family and community. As Carlson describes “[a]s the years went by, Aboriginal veterans increasingly played leadership roles in defending their communities’ interests.”⁵⁴⁷ One example took place...

...in the early 1970’s, when the federal government attempted to deny Stó:lō people the right to use the Coqueleetza Property in Chilliwack (which had formerly been set aside as an Indian Residential school and hospital) it was Stó:lō veterans who organized and led to the occupation of the site. Their leadership ultimately convinced the government to declare the property a collective reserve for the use of all Stó:lō people.⁵⁴⁸

Archie was one of the political leaders who led this occupation, and his role in this incident, along with the significant continuation of his leadership in content and form will be presented more fully in Chapter Five. Of particular significance, the Coqueleetza site was the very site where Stó:lō Tribal Council hosted the first Remembrance Day Ceremony.

⁵⁴⁵ Innes, “I’m On the Home Ground Now”, 35-36.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Carlson, *Witness*, 136.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, 137.

Treatment of Aboriginal and Stó:lō WWII Veterans: Changing Policy and Practice

The testimony and involvement of Aboriginal veterans in the formulation of key policy recommendations in the mid-1990s affected the public climate and perception of these veterans,⁵⁴⁹ representing a change from the immediate post-war period. According to the Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People, *The Aboriginal Soldier After the Wars*, “Indian policy was not significantly altered by World War I or II.”⁵⁵⁰ Historian J.R. Miller noted that hearings of a special committee from 1946 to 1948 and amendments to the *Indian Act* in 1951, “were remarkable for the opportunity they gave to newly organized Indians to express their opinions”, yet “the subsequent legislation was notorious for the ways in which it ignored what they had said.”⁵⁵¹ As Sheffield concluded, “Historical assessments have indicated that First Nations veterans faced administrative inadequacies that negatively influenced their ability to get the most from their re-establishment benefits.”⁵⁵²

Each veteran should have been informed of his rights to these benefits upon returning to civilian life. Yet, according to the 1995 Senate Report, “...it is evident that Indian Agents should

⁵⁴⁹ The 1990s witnessed some progress in policy and practice toward Aboriginal veterans. Both the Senate Committee Report and RCAP recommended government action to investigate and settle grievances and more fully acknowledge and commemorate the significant contributions made by Aboriginal servicemen in WWI, WWII, the Vietnam, and Korean Wars through the following: “giving a higher profile to Aboriginal veterans at National Remembrance Day services; funding the erection of war memorials in Aboriginal communities; and funding the continuing work of Aboriginal veterans' organizations.” *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People: Looking Forward, Looking Back* Volume 1, Part 2, “Chapter 12” (Ottawa: 1996), 59.

⁵⁵⁰ Standing Senate, “The Aboriginal Soldier After the Wars”, 26.

⁵⁵¹ Miller, *Skyscrapers*, 326.

⁵⁵² R. Scott Sheffield, “Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and the Veterans Charter After the Second World War,” *Aboriginal Peoples and Military Participation: Canadian and International Perspectives* edited by P. Whitney Lakenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle, 77-98. (Kingston: Canadian Defense Academy Press, 2007), 93.

have been well informed about the full range of benefits and their administration; whether Indian veterans were well informed is very much open to question.”⁵⁵³ However, “surviving Stó:lō veterans are unanimous in stating that they were never apprised of their entitlement to such benefits, let alone received any.”⁵⁵⁴ Archie’s experience reflected this sad reality. In his 1993 interview with Ed Labinski, he stated that he was not receiving any pension from the Army.⁵⁵⁵ In 2009, Archie’s health was failing due to a series of strokes and health complications. His mobility was impaired, something especially challenging for him given his self-reliant attitude and lifelong routine of doing physical work and labour. He was at the point where he was considering the acquisition of a wheelchair. In one of our discussions, he uses the humour so central to his character to discuss this matter:

AC: I’m going to get the army to get me a wheelchair.

MG: Oh good.

AC: With a motor on it.

MG: Oh good.

AC: Yeah. [laughs]

MG: You can soup the motor up.

AC: Yeah.

MG: [laughs] That’s the way to do it.

AC: Yeah.⁵⁵⁶

Archie never did receive a wheelchair prior to his death in November 2010. Testimony such as Archie’s about the ineffectual administration of Aboriginal veterans’ benefits is unfortunately all too common. The reasons for this are only partly known and visible; however, it remains clear that institutional politics played a part in the unsuccessful administration and

⁵⁵³ Standing Senate, “The Aboriginal Soldier After the Wars”, 32.

⁵⁵⁴ Carlson, *Witness*, 132.

⁵⁵⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵⁵⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

lack of communication that resulted in Native vets not being made fully aware of their Veterans' benefits.

Stó:lō Reconciliation, Recognition and Commemoration: 1993 Stó:lō War Veterans Project and Pole Raising

Stó:lō veterans of WWII did, however, find opportunities to make their wartime skills and experiences useful and appreciated. People recognized this and acknowledged that their military service had been, in many ways, beyond their control. Therefore, they were not to blame for having 'acted white' or appearing *stómex*. As a result of these changes in attitude, "in 1993 the *Stó:lō* Tribal Council organized and hosted a special Remembrance Day ceremony to specially honour the life-long contributions of their veterans."⁵⁵⁷ As USASK field school student Heather Woolard discovered in her 2002 oral history interviews with Stó:lō people, many community members spoke with pride about warriors and how the veterans were warriors, which she attributes to a cultural shift: "people's interpretations change over time. There is a strong willingness to honour veterans today because of the lack of recognition they received in the post war years."⁵⁵⁸

In Woolard's interview with future Stó:lō judge and Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Steven Point, a recognized *Siyá:m*, he pointed out that "veterans like Grand Chief Archie Charles are *Siya:ms*, and that while raiders were not honoured in the community,

⁵⁵⁷ Carlson, *Witness*, 137.

⁵⁵⁸ Heather Woolard, *Stó:lō First Nation Veterans: Why Were They Not Recognized Until 1993 and the Impacts on Community Members* (Unpublished paper 2002), 13.

warriors, the protectors of the community were honoured.”⁵⁵⁹ The 1993 ceremony hosted by the Stó:lō Tribal Council was the first public recognition of Stó:lō veterans. This recognition also included the raising of a memorial house post to honour the contribution of Stó:lō military veterans at home and abroad. At the initial 1993 Stó:lō Remembrance Day ceremony, “they emphasised not so much the *Stó:lō* veterans’ military contributions, but their post-war contributions to their community.”⁵⁶⁰ Some twenty years after the erection of the house post and the first Remembrance Day ceremony, the gathering has grown exponentially.

This shift in Stó:lō community response, a reconciliation between the traditional views of the role of warriors and the recognition of the contribution of Stó:lō vets overseas and at home, illustrates the continually evolving and innovative nature of Stó:lō culture, community and perceptions of their own history. Having been in attendance at the Remembrance Day ceremony with Archie and his family, I can attest that it is deeply meaningful and significant for him and his family. This photo of Archie illustrates the internally hybrid nature of the commemoration: at once recognizing Stó:lō veterans for their *stómex* contributions in wartime and their *Siyá:m* qualities in peacetime. **(Figure 4.6).**

Archie shared how he had been working to get acknowledgement for veterans for years prior to the 1993 pole raising: “I like that [the pole raising]. You know it’s pretty near time [that veterans were remembered]. I know we tried to get that done many years back, when the Union

⁵⁵⁹ Woolard, “Stó:lō First Nation Veterans” 14.

⁵⁶⁰ Carlson, *Witness*, 137.

of B.C. Chiefs started. It didn't work."⁵⁶¹ However, in the 1990s, RCAP painted a hopeful picture of the ongoing resolution of Native veterans affairs:

Aboriginal veterans of the Second World War are elderly now; those who survive are patient yet persistent. Although they have been distressed by the inequities in benefits for Aboriginal veterans, they are also hopeful that this time their story will be heard and their contributions and sacrifices honoured.⁵⁶²

However, Archie reflects that Remembrance Day ceremonies, while valuable, do not go far enough: "The only time they think about soldiers is on Remembrance Day. There is nothing done for the next month, there should be something different."⁵⁶³

Conclusion

Over the 50 years following the end of WWII, a confluence of historical, cultural and social factors inspired a shift in Stó:lō community response regarding their veterans. Stó:lō perception of the discrepancy between the *Siyá:m* and *stómex* qualities embodied by veterans and the evolving nature of such roles illuminates the need to more fully consider the local, cultural and historical perspectives on Indigenous military service. The cultural role of "warrior" is not homogenous within a single community (let alone across Indigenous communities or over time), as witnessed by evolving perceptions of warriors within the Stó:lō community. By the 1990s, many Stó:lō veterans, now Elders, had led highly successful lives, contributing in the political and social realms, acting as leaders, mediators and advocates on behalf of their families and community. The supposed *stómex* had proven themselves *Siyá:m*.

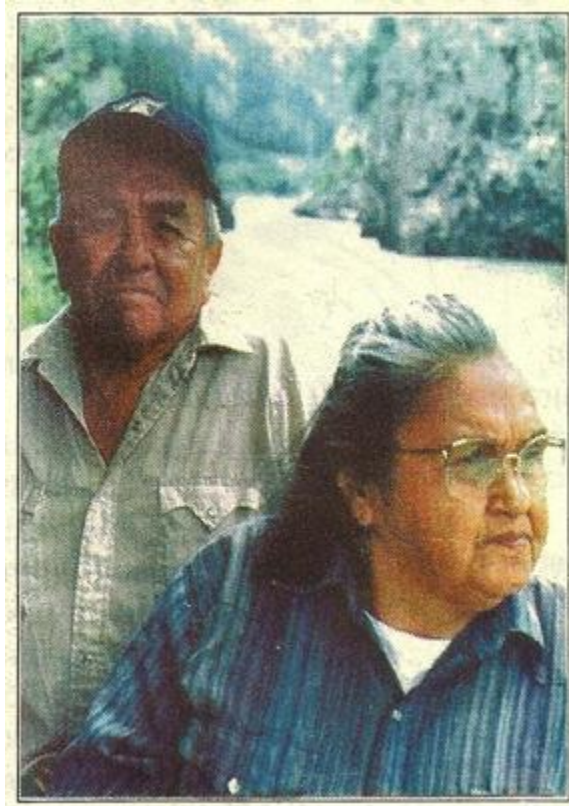
⁵⁶¹ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

⁵⁶² Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, "Chapter 12", 57.

⁵⁶³ Archie Charles, interview with Ed Labinski, June 3, 1994.

Similarly, the 1990s witnessed increased public recognition of the significant contribution of Aboriginal soldiers under both the general conditions of war as well as the particular challenges faced by Native servicemen and returning vets. This analysis of how Archie derived personal significance from his military service reveals that he displayed great personal agency, remaining at once steadfast in the protection and maintenance of his Stó:lō identity while overseas in service, yet deriving a message of equality from his cross-cultural experience. Archie balanced the preservation of his Stó:lō identity with his contribution as part of a collective national and global military war effort which saw him participate in a central way in the liberation of the Netherlands. For, in his words “we’re all equal.”

CHAPTER FIVE: ELECTED STÓ:LŌ CHIEF AND *SIYÁ:M* – LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN AN ERA OF TRANSITIONAL NATIVE POLITICS



Archie's remarkable success in the public realm as Chief of Seabird Island (1970-1998) was strongly nurtured by the presence of his life partner of forty years Tina Jack (née Lewis), and the strong emotionally supportive foundation she created in their home life. I asked Archie on one occasion what makes a happy marriage. He recalled his approach to their successful union with a laugh: "I'm the boss when she's not around, put it that way... Soon as she comes in the door, she's the boss!" Tina's biological siblings passed away when she was young so she grew up an only child. When Tina and Archie came together, she brought to their union her five children and they went on to take in some 18 step, foster and adopted children over the course of their lifetime together.

Entering politics as he did in a transitional era between Stó:lō traditional hereditary systems and the DIA - imposed electoral system, Archie maintained additional employment logging and farming in the tradition of his father Dave Charles. Archie's and Tina's belief that they had an abundance of resources to share with those who needed it inspired them to give freely. Multiple speakers at Archie's 2009 Order of Canada Ceremony held at Seabird Island remarked on the kind of equality Archie and Tina shared: "behind every strong man is a strong woman. Let's take a moment to acknowledge Tina."

Archie's leadership during an era of transitional Native politics was highly successful as evidenced by his unprecedented tenure as elected Chief. However, running like a current below his tangible successes are the complexities that characterize contemporary Indigenous politics and leadership. Keith Carlson elaborates in his recent work:

An Indian chief, be he or she elected, appointed, or a recognized hereditary or 'customary' leader, was nonetheless by definition an agent of the Minister of Indian Affairs, and as such his or her power and authority were in large part defined in, and subject to, the assimilationist *Indian Act*. Regardless of how earnestly and sincerely Indian chiefs may have tried to use their positions to advance and protect their constituents' rights and interests, and no matter how closely *Indian Act* band governance might have reflected and paralleled certain older traditional expressions of collective identity and governance, the system was inherently contradictory. The inescapable irony of history is that although chiefs and councilors ostensibly represented their communities' voice against the Canadian government and its citizenry, it was through those same chiefs and councilors that the Department of Indian Affairs attempted to impose its will on band members and reserve lands. The chiefs of contemporary First Nations operating under the *Indian Act* continue to wrestle with, and continue to be compromised by, these contradictions.⁵⁶⁴

Intrigued by the implications of these contradictions, in this chapter I show how Archie's success in politics was in large part the results of his interactions with newcomers and his response to individual and institutional attempts to assimilate him (via residential school, regulating his traditional fishery and military participation). Anthropologist Adrian Tanner notes: "Indians constitute a political minority which is largely external to the normal political system, and does not have the same notions about the legitimacy of the state."⁵⁶⁵

Given these challenges, in this chapter I explore the way Archie balanced his leadership to engage meaningfully and productively with both Stó:lō and Xwelítem society. I argue that

⁵⁶⁴ Carlson, *Power of Place*, 19.

⁵⁶⁵ Adrian Tanner (ed), *The Politics of Indianness: Case Studies of Native Ethnopolitics in Canada*. Institute of Social and Economic Research (St. Johns; Memorial University Press, 1983), 32.

Archie utilized the tools and perspectives he gained from his experiences with newcomers over the course of his lifetime, particularly his belief in cultural and social equality, to enact a form of Native self-determination using traditional forms of leadership to lead his community within the state-imposed structures.

Archie held the post of elected Chief of Seabird Island for 28 consecutive years from 1970 to 1998⁵⁶⁶, making him the longest-standing elected official in Seabird Island history. Prior to the government-imposed electoral system, a system of hereditary traditional leadership uniformly existed in the Stó:lō community, and in modified form it still does in some bands. Having been adopted, Archie did not have the biological Stó:lō ancestral lineage to predetermine his hereditary leadership role. During his time as Chief, he demonstrated that he was a proponent of reserve-based development, formal Western education, wage labour employment and commercial industry. He also sought the protection of Stó:lō Aboriginal Rights and Title and maintenance of Stó:lō culture; acting as a leading traditional fisher and a proponent of traditional food diets, as well as the creator of the Seabird Island Cultural Revival Festival. Though these goals may appear contradictory to some outsiders, and no doubt they did to many back in the 1970s, they seamlessly reinforced one another in Archie's mind. In terms of his approach to leadership, he is remembered as having embodied the Stó:lō qualities of *Siyá:m* – a peaceful negotiator who shows not tells and who serves the people with humility.

As described by anthropologist Wilson Duff, who wrote one of the early ethnographic descriptions of Stó:lō *Siyá:m* leadership: “A *Sie'm* was a good man who talked to his people to keep them straight and settle rows. He didn't really boss people around...but all the people

⁵⁶⁶ Elections for Seabird Island Band Council and Chief are held every two years.

would take his advice.”⁵⁶⁷ Further: “The Indians were clear that there had been no chiefs - in the sense of men chosen to fill an office of leadership - in former times. To them ‘chief’ means a man appointed by the Indian Superintendent to conduct affairs of a reserve...they speak of ‘leaders’ and ‘main leaders’, the most important of whom were by definition *sie’m*. All leaders were first and foremost heads of their family groups”⁵⁶⁸

My thesis shows that Archie – despite being an elected DIA chief –successfully lived up to Duff’s definition by implementing a form of innovative traditionalism based on his own unique approach, which I believe is aptly described as “protection through inclusion and engagement.” Archie engaged in a leadership style intended to protect and promote Stó:lō Rights and Title, history and culture primarily through diplomacy, mediation and, at times, protest in all areas of public and private life. This chapter demonstrates how he engaged in a process of sharing Stó:lō values and traditions with *Xwelítem* by encouraging family and community members to take pride in being Stó:lō and simultaneously supporting the use of *Xwelítem* resources and tools. These resources and tools were used to strengthen the health of his community, through such things as reserve-based development, formal Western education, participation in the wage labour economy, commercial industry and protection of Stó:lō Aboriginal Rights and Title.

Chronicling and interpreting Archie’s political career provides insight into an era of transitional Native politics and the impacts of colonialism on the pre-existing cultural roles and structures of leadership. Archie’s life narrative describes how he straddled his traditional and

⁵⁶⁷ Duff, “Upper Stalo”, 80.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, 81.

contemporary leadership styles and provides crucial and timely insight into successful inclusion of local forms of governance in a contemporary setting.

This chapter draws primarily on the oral testimony of Archie, his family members, and colleagues. Archie spoke freely and openly with me about his experience as Chief, community leader, father and grandfather. Unlike some other aspects of his life history, in which he chose not to fully elucidate his memories (such as aspects of his residential school experience or part of his time in the military), he enjoyed discussions of political, community and family life. Archie spoke more freely of events in the public realm – politics and fishing: his memories of events in the public sphere of action were therefore easier for me to interpret and contextualize. However, this humility – the core characteristic of the *Siyá:m*, which gave him his strength – deterred him from presenting his experiences as accomplishments. This chapter presents and analyzes Archie's life experience and how it shaped the enormous contribution he made as a community and family leader.

In order to take into account his humility when recording his narrative, I shifted my oral history methods to interview not only Archie, but also his family members, former political colleagues, friends and associates to better contextualize not simply what his accomplishments were, but how and why they are so significant, culturally and locally. As noted in the introductory chapter, I took to heart the words of Stó:lō cultural advisor and traditional knowledge keeper Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts'i*), who suggested that in addition to Archie's humility acting as a barrier to gaining contextual information about the impact of his actions,

that there is also a cultural protocol which exists in this context. This protocol mandates the avoidance of directly asking a Stó:lō person to recount their accomplishments.⁵⁶⁹

Meeting “The Boss”, Soul Mate and Life Partner, Tina Jack

Archie and wife Susan Pat Charlie separated in the mid-1960s⁵⁷⁰, without having children. Archie’s mother, Mary Charles’ 1972 interview provides candid insight into her son’s tumultuous personal life at that time:

He’s got another woman now you know, and this woman’s good to him. Susan was good, but she liked to drink too much. She left him for another man and she’s in Vancouver now. She left him for I don’t know how long before Archie met this woman, Willie Lewis’s daughter from Katz. She’s from Katz. Susan was from Katz too. She was good! When she was sober, you couldn’t find a woman better than Susan. But she liked to drink too much. She couldn’t stop. Couldn’t make her. Tried to talk to her and she’d say ‘O.K., O.K.’ She was easy to get along with. But that drink sure caused a lot of heartaches. A lot of separations caused by it.⁵⁷¹

Sometime after he and Susan separated, Archie met and fell in love with Willie Lewis’ daughter from Katz,⁵⁷² Christina Lewis, better known as Tina Jack, the woman with whom he would spend the rest of his life, and affectionately refer to as his soul mate or “the boss”.

Christina Jack (née Lewis) was born January 20, 1928 in Hope, B.C. (see **Figure 5.1**) Tina’s mother was Catherine Lewis (née Josh) of Chawathil and her father was William Lewis of Chawathil,⁵⁷³ who was forty years older than her mom. Tina had two siblings, Cecilia and a brother (name unknown) who both passed away, and so Tina was raised an only child. Archie

⁵⁶⁹ Sonny McHalsie, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, July 9, 2007.

⁵⁷⁰ Tina Jack and Caroline Credico, informal correspondence, March 21, 2015.

⁵⁷¹ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

⁵⁷² Katz is also known as Chawathil Reserve.

⁵⁷³ Stó:lō Nation Genealogical Records for Tina Jack (Lewis), July 23, 2008.

described the circumstances of how they began their courtship: “Well, I knew her pretty well all the time. She didn’t have a place, we got together, that’s, oh forty years ago... still going!”⁵⁷⁴

Over the years, Tina has become a cherished grandmother-type figure and mentor to me. Tina is a soft-spoken woman, humble, gentle and kind. Those who know her know her soft trademark giggle; she often speaks with a laugh even about what seems to me as the direst of circumstances, using gentle humour to overcome life’s challenges. She has a quiet contentment about her and is continually working: supporting her family members with encouragement and comfort, cooking, canning, cleaning and maintaining her household. For most of her life she enjoyed creating various forms of folk art; however, in recent years she has lost her eyesight, so she has been unable to do much of it. Perhaps most illustrative of Tina’s approach of gratitude and acceptance was in a conversation we had while discussing her loss of vision and inability to do artwork. She remarked with a giggle: “Well I guess my eyes did pretty good for eighty years so I’ll be happy with that.” In one of our interviews she described her initial meeting and courtship with Archie, stating:

[with laughter] Yeah! I had a hangover, I was drinking for a while before that! [laughs] I had a bad hangover! The worst part of it is it was about two in the afternoon and I was walking the streets in the heat waiting for the liquor store to open up, and Archie and his two friends were across the street and every time I would walk across the street they were whistling and yelling and I did not like that! So I couldn’t stand him then! [laughs] I don’t know the word for it, he was very, very outspoken then [laughs] but I did get my mickey [of alcohol] then! I had to pass them, and from then on, they said “we’ll drive you to Seabird then we’ll bring you home” and they never did.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁵⁷⁵ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

And so began a relationship that would last over forty years, until Archie's passing in 2010. Tina brought her own family to her new partnership with Archie. At the time of their initial courtship, Tina was mother to six children: Irene, Lewis or "Lew", Caroline, Louise, and Lillian ("Bugsy"). Tina's second child, Frederick Joseph, died in 1948 shortly after childbirth.⁵⁷⁶ Tina describes the challenges she faced giving birth during the historic 1948 flood in Chilliwack:

During the 1948 flood, I was stuck in Coqueleetza hospital for a month and so I didn't see Frederick, my parents picked him up, took him home and buried him before the flood got really bad. 'Cause one morning after he was born, the doctor came and told me my little boy wasn't doing too well and it was the morning and in the afternoon he said my baby passed away. I don't remember after that. I don't know, really. It's not there. I don't remember nothing. And in the meantime, my first husband he took to being an alcoholic and he wasn't there for us most of the time, he wasn't even there when I had to go to the hospital. A friend walked me about a mile up the road, crossed over the river...Got across the Fraser and then had to go another hour to get to a phone and call a taxi and he did that for me and he left me. Well, it was something that had to be done [laughs]. The only way I could get in touch with my husband was they announced it on the radio that they were looking for him, so he must have heard it wherever he was drinking or whatever he was doing and he thought it was me who died. But I don't remember much of that either.⁵⁷⁷

She continued to describe the tragic events:

His name was Arthur George, he was from the O'hamel Reserve.⁵⁷⁸ He was with me for thirteen years and then he drowned.⁵⁷⁹ He was drinking and he drowned. So [son] Lew must have been four, I don't know. I know we were living at Ruby Creek at that time he drowned, he was looking for a job and he never came home that night and I had his supper warming in the oven. Then my neighbours came over and said 'you better come over to our house, we heard something on the radio' and I went over there and they announced that he drowned in Hope. We walked from Ruby Creek to Chawathil, that's

⁵⁷⁶ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 11, 2010 (unrecorded).

⁵⁷⁷ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

⁵⁷⁸ Currently called *Shxw'ōwhámel* Reserve.

⁵⁷⁹ Daughter Caroline Credico says he passed in June 1959. Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, September 19, 2013.

about two or three miles on the track to get to my parents' house. So that's part of my life.⁵⁸⁰

Tina remarried, but her second husband, Frank Jack, passed away in 1961. Tina's quiet strength, humility and ability to manage crisis seemed to click with Archie even in the early years of their courtship. Tina relocated to Archie's home of Seabird Island, as did her children Lewis, Irene, Lillian ("Bugsy") and Caroline. Her daughter Louise currently lives in Chawathil.

The flexibility and adaptability that characterized Archie's public leadership is also evident in the circumstances in which he and Tina continued their relationship. At her request, Archie and Tina maintained a common-law, rather than a married relationship for the remainder of his life. Mary Charles lived in a house next door to Archie and Tina until her passing in 1974. This was a significant gesture on his part. Living common-law next door to his mother, Mary Charles, a devout Catholic, signified his devotion to Tina and his ability to break from tradition. Tina shared with me recently that she always wondered if Mary Charles felt they were "living in sin."⁵⁸¹ Tina did not want to remarry and wished to maintain her status as a member of the Chawathil Band.

Tina's daughter Caroline told me about becoming Archie's stepdaughter. Since both her and her siblings' father and stepfather had passed when they were still young, Archie took them in as his own. Caroline states that, in lieu of the term stepdaughter, she would use the term "traditional" daughter to describe her relationship with Archie, a term that highlights the

⁵⁸⁰ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

⁵⁸¹ Tina Jack, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, November 27, 2014.

flexibility with which adoption and kinship are understood to powerfully extend beyond blood relations.⁵⁸²

Maintaining A Stó:lō Practice of Inter-Family Adoption: “I Call it ‘Adopted’ But it Meant We Were Just There For Them.”

Shortly after meeting each other, both Archie and Tina stopped drinking.⁵⁸³ Archie recalled how he did this, and quit smoking, all in one day: “I quit drinking and smoking those things...[I] hated it. Making me thin in my bank book.”⁵⁸⁴ He recollected with a bemused laugh “I had a mickey of gin in my back pocket...so I threw it over [the banks of the Fraser River]... Never missed it either.”⁵⁸⁵ He further mused, “I’m not sorry for it. There comes a day when everybody straightens around I think, well some, anyways....”⁵⁸⁶

Having Tina bring five children, plus grandchildren, to their partnership, Archie found himself with the large family he had never had. Helped by Tina’s loving ways, they decided to adopt more children in response to seeing children whose parents were temporarily unable to care for them, thereby participating in a long standing Stó:lō tradition of inter-family adoption and caretaking provided by grandparents.

Historian Stephanie Danyluk’s recent MA research exploring Stó:lō kinship and family systems contextualizes this practice. Her work is based on “investigating how families were

⁵⁸² Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, September 19, 2013.

⁵⁸³ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972, Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

⁵⁸⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 28, 2008.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

variously defined by internal systems of power, how these definitions and applications of local customs varied among individuals, and how this shapes the reactions to outside systems of power.”⁵⁸⁷ The removal of Stó:lō children from their homes via residential schools and, subsequent to that, the “sixties scoop”⁵⁸⁸ - where Stó:lō children were sent away for adoption or foster care - eroded the long-standing position and responsibility of grandparents within Stó:lō families. Viewed by many as an extension of the institutional control and assimilationist model of the residential schools system, the “sixties scoop” resulted in thousands of Native children across Canada being placed in foster care or adoptive homes, often with *Xwelítem* families. Tina stressed to me the tension between state-imposed, colonial policies that shape child-rearing and cultural and individual perspectives on family. She shared with me her views of the authority of government (Child and Family Services⁵⁸⁹) to make decisions about Stó:lō families, reflecting that “(t)hey [child welfare authorities] go by the book. Not the Indian; us Natives have different ways than say you or anybody else, what I read about and compare, children belong with their grandparents, that didn't matter; now they are so strict.”⁵⁹⁰ Tina described her philosophy and

⁵⁸⁷ Danyluk, ““We Let Them Be”, 79.

⁵⁸⁸ Also sometimes referred to as the “Stolen Generation”, the term ‘sixties scoop’ was coined by Patrick Johnston in his 1983 report, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*. It refers to the Canadian practice, beginning in 1959 and continuing until the 1980s, of apprehending unusually high numbers of children of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and fostering or adopting them out, usually into white families. See Patrick Johnson, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983).

⁵⁸⁹ “In the early 1990’s, the Stó:lō regained some control over their Child and Family Services with the creation of Xyolhemeylh Child and Family Services program. The program, established in 1993, was designed to take on responsibilities regarding the delivery of child and family services to their on-reserve population.” (Danyluk, “We Let Them Be”, 62) See Danyluk for further analysis of the impact of this program.

⁵⁹⁰ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

how they began adopting: “I call it ‘adopted’ but it meant we were just there for them.”⁵⁹¹

Stephanie Danyluk’s oral history interview with Stó:lō families on the topic of adoption supports

Tina’s assertion. She observes that:

Among the interviewees, there was a clear distaste for the terms “adoption” or “fostering,” and most favoured referring to the practice as “taking in” children. In addition to distinguishing their approach from those imposed on Indigenous communities through colonial policies and practices, taking in children is much more private, often based on the private knowledge of culture and tradition held within extended families. As scholarship on the Coast Salish has affirmed, holding important private knowledge within the extended family remains an important way to maintain status within Coast Salish communities.⁵⁹²

While there is a long standing tradition of Stó:lō grandparents taking in family members, Stephanie Danyluk’s research on the topic further shows that there is also great variation in the ways in which families maintain this practice. She states that the approaches of families like Archie’s and Tina’s, or Elizabeth Herrling’s, (another Elder of the Seabird Island community who took in a large number of children), were each, in their own way, distinctive; that there is no singular or homogenous approach to child-rearing and family “composition”. She reflects that:

There are many ways that the Stó:lō approach taking in children, and all have unique understandings and reasons for doing so. Individual experience combines with the collective cultural memory of the Stó:lō to define, on an individual level, how each family approaches adoption and fostering.⁵⁹³

She further describes the approaches within the community: “Some may take in children out of necessity, some may choose not to take in any children at all, and others may act in participation with government programs or services.”⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Danyluk, “We Let Them Be”, 67.

⁵⁹³ Ibid, 76.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid, 75-76.

Sonya Crey Wilson was the daughter of Archie and Mary “Mamie” Crey from Chawathil. However, Sonya and Archie did not come to know each other until shortly before her death on January 3, 1974. (see **Figure 5.2**) After having lost his first biological child, Eddy, in the house fire, Archie lost his second biological child in a similarly tragic fashion; Sonya was found dead on a logging road at age 20. According to newspaper clippings saved by the family, “she must have been taken in a car to the place where her body was found.”⁵⁹⁵ The article goes on to further state that “the cause of Ms. Crey’s death is not known. Nor is it known whether she was alive or dead when she was taken to the place where her body was found.”⁵⁹⁶ Sonya’s untimely death led to an RCMP investigation into her possible murder⁵⁹⁷ with charges eventually being laid.⁵⁹⁸ However, daughter Rose stated to me that she did not know the name of the perpetrator.⁵⁹⁹ A funeral was held for Sonya at Seabird Island. Tina once remarked to me, of life and death, that sometimes it seems “when one is taken away one is given,” using the tragedy of Sonya’s untimely passing as an example.

Tina and Archie adopted Sonya’s young daughter Rose (Archie’s biological granddaughter), born August 20, 1973, and raised her as their daughter. Archie gave Rose his last name. Sonya’s brother, Thomas Crey, born October 1, 1954⁶⁰⁰, is a lifelong and valued member of the Charles-Jack family, and is Tina’s daughter Caroline Credico’s former partner, and therefore a special person in Tina’s life from her home community of Chawathil. Thomas

⁵⁹⁵ Unknown newspaper, undated article #1, provided by Caroline Credico.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Unknown newspaper, undated article #2, provided by Caroline Credico.

⁵⁹⁸ Rose Charles, correspondence with Meagan Gough, March 14, 2015.

⁵⁹⁹ Rose Charles, correspondence with Meagan Gough, May 13, 2015

⁶⁰⁰ Caroline Credico, informal correspondence, March 21, 2015.

can often be found helping Tina run errands or helping around the house, and in the summer, setting up fishcamp. In a twist of fate, the photograph Tina loves so much of herself as a young child pictures her playing with Mary Crey, whose grandchild she would later adopt as her own. (see Figure 5.3)

Tina's description of the decision to pursue inter-family adoption perhaps reflects her personal perception of the flexibility inherent in family roles more than a strict belief in adoption or fostering. Her views are also supported by scholar Alexandra Harmon, who argues that Coast Salish people "continued to associate with each other in ways that hinged more on notions of kinship and respect for local customs than on government edicts."⁶⁰¹

Tina's detailed *sqwélqwel* or "true news" of how each child was adopted reflects the varied and complex context in which each child was brought into the family, with her and Archie as primary caretakers. Over the years, Tina has recounted aspects of this *sqwélqwel* to me on a number of occasions. Part of it is as follows:

The first one was Marlene, she wasn't walking yet and [mother] Irene and her husband spilt up, he went with another woman and left her and baby behind and Marlene suffered, missing her dad, she really suffered, crying for her dad. So we took her and raised her, she was with us for nineteen years. The next one that came along was William. He used to be called "wee Willie" because he was so tiny. His mother abandoned him when he was a month old, so Lewie asked me to look after him. We were on our way to fishcamp, the very day that Lewis phoned me and asked "can you take Willie?" So when we got Willie all he had on was a little diaper and I had to scrounge up clothes, he stayed with us for twenty seven years, then he left, got married and all that.⁶⁰²

Tina describes the adoption of Archie's biological daughter Sonya Crey's newborn, Rose, into their home after Sonya's untimely passing at age 20.

⁶⁰¹ Alexandra Harmon, "Coast Salish History" In *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, edited by Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 30–54, 39.

⁶⁰² Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

Then came Rose. The same thing, her mother was a heavy drinker, Sonya was the mother's name, she didn't really know her dad, which was Papa [Archie]. She was almost a teenager before she really came to know who her dad was, who was Papa. Then she got to know him for maybe about a year and then she died. So we had Rose from six months old, too.⁶⁰³

Tina recalled to me that the paternity of Sonya was withheld from Archie but that he was pleased once he knew she was his daughter. Tina also embraced the opportunity to adopt Rose.⁶⁰⁴ The conception and untimely passing of Sonya was an aspect of Archie's private life which he spoke very little of to me. While he would openly and freely discuss the adoption of Rose, whom he referred to as his daughter, his feelings about Sonya's conception or the tragic events of her passing were never made explicit to me. What I have come to understand as characteristic of both Archie's narrative style and ethos, he focused his reminiscences on tangible outcomes of stressful or tragic events. However, as is evident in told-to narratives of some other Aboriginal narrators like Stó:lō logger Hank Pennier⁶⁰⁵ or *Secwepemc* leader George Manuel⁶⁰⁶, avoiding full disclosure of private memories is not uncommon, though it exists in sharp contrast to Western literary convention (and some might argue current cultural norms). Where silences and omissions in Archie's life narrative existed, I sought follow up interviews with family members. My hope was to gain context about Archie's omissions relative to particular events of his private life: to better understand the underlying reasons for his silences. Were these silences a result of him not wishing to share information with me specifically, not having the opportunity to do so prior to his death, or simply his desire to hold particular reminiscences of

⁶⁰³ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

⁶⁰⁴ Tina Jack, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, November 27, 2014.

⁶⁰⁵ See: Fagan's analysis in "Private Stories".

⁶⁰⁶ Manuel, *Fourth World*, 1976

his life experience close to him? Caroline indicated to me that while he shared “the facts” of the events, he didn’t relate “the story” adding that in their home “he didn’t say much about it, and we didn’t really ask.”⁶⁰⁷ It becomes clear that in this instance, as elsewhere, his feelings and beliefs were to be understood in the light of his actions, not expressed in words. What is visible too is that Archie, Tina and family acknowledged the situation and focused on embracing the positive outcomes, in this case the adoption of granddaughter Rose as his daughter. He further elaborated on the role of grandparents in Stó:lō culture: “Well, they put their two bits worth in there, you know. They can adopt, they can tell the story, then the whole thing comes out, hey. So and so is from here, and from somewhere else.”⁶⁰⁸

In his family, Archie also enacted his characteristic approach to leadership - showing, not telling - by generously accepting young children in need into his home, as opposed to telling others they should do this too, or critiquing their parenting or life skills. He once remarked that the reason he stayed sober after quitting drinking was inspired by his new role as parent: “Well, you know, when you got all them children you have got to give an example for them. It’s worth it if some of them don’t do wrong.”⁶⁰⁹ So as life would have it, by his late forties, Archie would end up following the path of Mary and Dave Charles, enacting their practice of intra-and inter-family adoption and giving back in a way that was deeply personal and meaningful to him. For Archie, children and family did not need to be biologically related to be acknowledged as family.

There appears to have been several motivators for Archie to adopt at this time of his life. While Tina’s and Archie’s pursuit of multiple adoptions is a relatively common practice among

⁶⁰⁷ Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

Stó:lō families, it is exceptional in terms of the sheer number of children they adopted and fostered. In her Master's thesis, Stephanie Danyluk further contextualizes how adoption links to larger cultural practices associated with resource sharing, noting that, "sharing was important to the maintenance and survival of the Stó:lō people, but it was also a way that you showed that you were worthy and could provide leadership."⁶¹⁰ Danyluk indicates how ethnographer Wayne Suttles established that the term *Siyá:m* was not necessarily used to distinguish amongst those who shared. Suttles states, "One could say the si'ém [*Siyá:m*] of the villiage, but the title did not imply a political office. If there was a si'ém, he was probably the wealthiest man, the leader in the potlatch. Leadership in other matters was apt to be in the hands of others, depending upon their special abilities."⁶¹¹ Anthropologist Jay Miller further elaborates on the centrality of the idea of "task masters" within Coast Salish leadership in his book *Anchored Radiance*.⁶¹² A related motivator for adoption involves the passing on of Archie's hereditary or ancestral names which he had gained via his adoptive, not his biological parents to future generations. Stó:lō ancestral names are indicators of high status, and Archie's names were no exception. And as such, his ancestral names shaped his responsibility to fulfill the cultural principle of sharing.

All ancestral names carry specific rights and responsibilities which are passed down to the individual (called being "covered with a name") and both the names Archie obtained via his adoptive parents underscore and communicate community leadership. "*Nwéwtm*" - his *Nlaka'pamux* name, was passed on to him from Mary Charles and is a name also carried by

⁶¹⁰ Danyluk, "We Let Them Be", 75.

⁶¹¹ Suttles, "Private Knowledge", 6.

⁶¹² See the Introductory chapter of Jay Miller's *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

highly regarded *Nlaka'pamux* leader Paul Yowala. “*T'exeyelh*.” was passed down from “an old Chehalis Chief”⁶¹³ by his adoptive father Dave Charles. Archie passed on his two hereditary names: the Stó:lō name *T'exeyelh* to biological daughter Sonya Crey’s grandson Kelsey, and the *Nlaka'pamux* name “*Nwéwtm*”⁶¹⁴ to Tina’s great-grandson Ronald “Zack” Joe. According to protocol, it is the responsibility of the individual carrying the name to learn about those who have carried it before them. Zack recently learned more from *Nlaka'pamux* elders about his ancestral name. Consequently, by choosing one biological descendant and one adopted descendant to pass his names on to, Archie ensured that future generations of his adoptive and biological family would maintain caretaking authority over ancestral resources - cultural and physical - specifically fishing spots in the Fraser Canyon. How hereditary access, use and ownership of these resources is defined and enacted will be more fully discussed in the following chapter.

Another motivator for taking in children was Archie’s deep personal connection with adoption himself. He once revealed the personal impact his adoption had on him: he was sensitive to the reality that, since he was chosen by Mary and Dave Charles, he never wanted any other of the children “who weren’t picked” not to have a home.

⁶¹³ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

⁶¹⁴ As Stó:lō Elders will instruct, part of carrying an ancestral name is learning of its history and about the ancestors who have carried that name prior to it being passed on. In a recent conversation I had with Zack Joe, he relayed that while attending an Elder’s gathering in *Nlaka'pamux* territory in Lillooet, he learned the proper spelling of the name is actually “*Nwéwtm*.” He further recalled that the Elders “knew Papa [Archie] and his Mother [Mary Charles] and that the name rightfully translates into “A Place of Calling”, “many of them had heard of Paul Yowala who was a prominent person in their territory” (Zack Joe, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, July 31, 2013).

While his union with Tina brought a large number of stepchildren and subsequent adopted and foster children into his life, which he welcomed on a personal and familial level, Stephanie Danyluk's research with Stó:lō community members suggests a corollary result of his actions was the maintenance of his high status. Her interviews establish that some members of the community place their foster and adoption practices in opposition to those who receive Government support for taking in children rather than use their own resources, thereby asserting their family's status as community leaders. She states that:

While familial obligations contribute to the internal care of family networks, these are not unconnected to claims to status and authority among Stó:lō families...they are grounding their approach in the private knowledge that distinguishes their family as "high class" people. But they are also ensuring that these networks are maintained internally...as some [Stó:lō people] insist they have for countless generations.⁶¹⁵

Prior to Archie's passing in 2010, Tina reflected that "The family is up in the 90s with the foster children, adopted children and everything," further stressing that "[w]e did like Mary and Dave, we brought up many children like them, 'the Stó:lō way.'"⁶¹⁶

Becoming *Siyá:m* in an Era of Transitional Politics - The 1970s

Archie's early and sustained success in politics was based on a confluence of events and mutually reinforcing factors: it combined and enhanced his personality (humble, quiet, show-not-tell, self-reliant, hardworking), his familial teachings from his youth (particularly a belief in Western education, developing cross-cultural relations, adoption), his ancestral names (chiefs) and his life experience (particularly lessons derived from cross-cultural experiences). This resulted in an unprecedented leadership on Seabird Island that combined tradition and

⁶¹⁵ Danyluk, "We Let Them Be", 75.

⁶¹⁶ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

innovation. In an interview I conducted with Clem Seymour, the current Chief of Seabird Island and a close friend of Archie's over the years, he remarked that Archie took his time before entering politics so he "could be his own man."⁶¹⁷

Archie began his political career as a councillor of Seabird Island, followed by a successful nomination to Chief in 1970, a position to which he was consecutively re-elected an unprecedented 14 times, until he retired in 1998. Mary Charles' reflections provide keen insight into Archie's foray into politics and the key to his early success.

My son Archie, he's the new Chief [at Seabird Island]... Everything was run down...Archie's new on the job, and he understands and he treats everybody the same. And everybody trusts him because he doesn't drink. He quit drinkin' now for two years and a half. He used to drink heavy. Now he quit. He got ahead when he quit. You shoulda seen him when he was drinking... Now he's just - everything's good.⁶¹⁸

Part of what was so remarkable was Archie's ability to integrate the cultural authority ascribed to the *Siyá:m* into a contemporary political setting. According to Keith Carlson, who knew and worked with Archie Charles:

Despite the government's efforts to create a new type of leadership – one that's based on elections and first past the post and majority rules – and a lot of communities have a leader who really protects his own family and supporters but is rather neglectful of the rest of the community, that's never been Archie's way. He's very much in the mold of if you look at the old ethnographies and say, 'What is the definition of a *Siyá:m* – a hereditary or a traditional leader?' you know, Archie's lived that. So here he was in the 1980s and '90s, well after that type of leadership should have disappeared according to the government, and yet Archie was still there manifesting it and modelling that to other people.⁶¹⁹

Interested in Archie's perception of the role of *Siyá:m*, I asked him on one occasion:

"Since you've been a Chief, how would you describe being a *Siyá:m*?", to which he responded:

⁶¹⁷ Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

⁶¹⁸ Mary Charles, interview with Roy Point, February 25, 1972.

⁶¹⁹ Keith Thor Carlson, interview with Meagan Gough, June 20, 2009.

“Well in the old days he was the boss and never worked for anything. Everybody stayed home and all that stuff. It should have been like that. [laughs] Wasn't like that the 28 years I put in here!”⁶²⁰ Archie further noted of his time as Chief that “You don't clock in and out.”⁶²¹ Archie's actions illustrate that he carried forward the traditional leadership role of the *Siyá:m* in the way that he made himself accessible to the people. He rejected the increasingly colonial administration of highly regulated time spent “at work” and “at home” – for he understood being a community leader to mean carrying that role while in the office and in all other areas of his life.

While Archie is viewed by many to have embodied and maintained the *Siyá:m* role, at the heart of his ability to do so in such a successful way was Tina's contribution to his personal and family life. Tina - always one to participate but who disliked to be “out there in front”, as she once described it to me - maintained their home and domestic world in such a way that it supported Archie enacting his *Siyá:m* role with a breadth that extended beyond political leadership to his personal life. Her love, support and humility helped enable his vision of caring for foster, adopted and extended family. Chief Clem Seymour further contextualized the differences in the government model and political system when Archie was leader, reflecting: “Chiefs didn't have big expense accounts. They fundraised to go places. Because they didn't have the infrastructure we have today.”⁶²² One of the circumstances of Archie's early years as Chief is that he worked without taking pay, just an honorarium, and needed to seek employment outside of politics. He described the shift from the hereditary to electoral system that he was situated within in this way:

⁶²⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

When I became Chief, they weren't paying. So I had to do my own [gestures with hands to indicate working], so went into the cattle business, bought myself a CAT and went into the logging, and I was my own boss and ran the reserve at the same time. Once I got used to it, I was OK.”⁶²³

I asked Archie to further describe the requirement to supplement his Chief's honorarium with additional employment, as his salary barely covered his travel costs to attend meetings with provincial and federal government officials or Native political organizations. I asked: “You never took a salary as a chief?” to which he replied: “About \$200 or \$150 a month I think. Wasn't very much.”⁶²⁴ He further described of his experience in an era of transitional politics:

The old way is hereditary, eh? And then Indian Affairs said no, it wasn't working in some places so they put it up for election, to vote. Only problem was there was no money with it you know, like I had to hold down two jobs for a start. Then I got my own cattle, my own machinery and cleared some more land.⁶²⁵

He concluded that he did it because he felt it was really what he *should* do.⁶²⁶ In keeping with the cultural status ascribed to those who share resources, Archie once reflected to me that, even given the large number of children, grandchildren and foster children he and Tina supported during his years as Chief, he perceived that what he had was more than some. As a result, it was his responsibility to share it.

The current Chief of Sumas, Dalton Silver (*Lemxyaltexw*) was entering politics in the 1970s and often accompanied Archie on his travels to regional meetings and forums, acting as his driver. Dalton recalls of Archie “how calm and straightforward he took things”, describing one occasion “while driving on the Coquihalla highway we saw a bear and I got pretty excited

⁶²³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

when I realized it wasn't a black bear and Archie just said matter-of-factly 'Yeah, Grizzly' like it was nothing out of the ordinary."⁶²⁷ But perhaps most illustrative of Archie's approach to leadership of showing not telling is Silver's story of how Archie would insist on travelling for political meetings. He didn't merely talk about fiscal responsibility as Chief, he lived it. Silver recalls "Archie would stay in the skid row of East Vancouver and eat at the cheapest places, even having breakfast at Burger King or McDonald's. Some people are nervous even to walk the streets of East Vancouver." Silver further adds: "It was absolutely by choice. He didn't want to spend all the people's money. At the time, we had a secretary who would book rooms but Archie took care of it himself. He used to say 'he liked to stay where all the Indians were.'"⁶²⁸

The results of Archie's exceptional ability to lead by quiet example, enacting the traditional role of *Siyá:m* within contemporary politics, were twofold: this ability not only made him immensely popular as a leader within his community, it also proved useful in his negotiations with government officials and non-Stó:lō stakeholders, garnering him much respect. As observed by scholars of Salish history (Suttles, Miller, Duff and Danyluk), his acts of sharing his resources freely (his time, home, fish and land) served to further strengthen his cultural identity and gave him status and authority within the Stó:lō community.

Archie's leadership was characterized by an approach that sought protection through inclusion and engagement. By living and utilizing core Stó:lō values to educate both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō and ensuring that these values formed the basis of inter- and intra-community relationships, he managed to straddle a line between traditional forms of leadership and state-

⁶²⁷ Dalton Silver, interview with Meagan Gough, August 8, 2012.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

imposed governance structures and lead his community into the contemporary world using traditional teachings. Archie's legacy can be witnessed in a number of key areas in his community leadership: reserve-based development, advocating for opportunities for formal Western education, focusing on wage labour economy, on-reserve commercial industry and the protection of Stó:lō Aboriginal Rights and Title.

Reserve-Based Development: Improving Housing Conditions and Building Infrastructure

Clem Seymour provides insight into the unique knowledge and teachings Archie brought to his early years as Chief:

He created a lot of stability here. He held onto the vision our Elders had way back in the 1950s. He did things in a way that everybody was going to be involved. He'd stay quiet on a lot of issues, let them take care of their jobs and got it done... Seabird in [the] 1950s, we only had 13 homes. We were held in common as 7 bands. We had to wait for 7 chiefs to agree. The Elders created a vision for what they wanted for Seabird, they wanted their own autonomy in education for their children, they wanted their own housing. Archie walked with that.⁶²⁹ He wanted that. We know this [world] is not ours, it's ours to look after it. He didn't say anything he just let us look after it. That's important he didn't talk about. 'It don't belong to me it belongs to our grandchildren' and that's what our Elders wanted us to remember.⁶³⁰

Upon taking office, Archie "began operating the first Seabird Island Band Office out of Band Member Mary Lou Andrew's home. The office was only be staffed by three Band members: Chief Archie Charles, Richard Louie and Mary Lou Andrew. The Seabird Island Band Office of today employs over 220 staff members."⁶³¹ Illustrative of Archie's conviction about building a strong team environment within Band government administration, in 1980 Archie

⁶²⁹ A colloquialism that refers to "carrying forward" or maintaining cultural values.

⁶³⁰ Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

⁶³¹ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date May 3, 2013).

appointed “Daryl McNeil as Band Manager; a position in which Daryl continues to serve to this day. Archie also oversaw the first paved road in 1980, Chowat Road, which remains the main road through Seabird Island.”⁶³² Archie described his fight for the construction of the road: “there was no road here at that time, it was all field, and the roads didn’t come in until one of our students got killed getting off the bus. The driver was supposed to stop, but he didn’t and the little guy ran out. So, I went out and seen the Minister of Highways. I told him I wanted a road put in for our school bus, to get the kids off safe. So, that’s how come that road got put in.”⁶³³

Early in Archie’s first term as Chief, he also made the creation of adequate housing on reserve a priority. Seabird Island entered into a “partnership with the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, and from 1972 to 1975 Seabird Island would build the first housing authority homes - many of which still stand.”⁶³⁴ His methods, by which he made housing a priority, exemplified his engaged yet not controlling style of leadership: “You know that I worked side-by-side with the workers, Chiefs now they sit in the office... [they] don’t know what’s going on outside.”⁶³⁵ The construction boom in Seabird Island carried on from 1979-2001 as twelve phases of social housing construction began and dozens of homes were completed. Many of the homes would be built by Seabird Island Band members.⁶³⁶ As Clem Seymour reflects:

He doesn’t talk too much about these things. He was Chief when we put in this staff building in 1996. When he started he had a staff of 2; and you look at what Archie built we have a staff of 200. He built employment.⁶³⁷

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

⁶³⁴ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶³⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁶³⁶ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶³⁷ Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

Creating Opportunities for Formal Western Education: The Genesis of Community-Based Education on Seabird Island Reserve

Despite the fact that he did not obtain a diploma after his attendance at Kamloops Residential School, Archie went on to be a strong proponent of formal education, in the tradition of his mother, Mary Charles. Archie described how the history of community-run education at Seabird Island could be traced back to the vision his Elders had to open an on-reserve school. Members of Seabird Island engaged in fundraising and volunteered labour to facilitate the building of the school when funding was not sufficient. Archie described this history to me while sitting at his kitchen table, which overlooks the schools:

There were Indians around, but it was 1958 and we wanted a bigger school and a new Church and they wanted us to split into separate bands. We said 'no', other people want some. So our Chief said put our people on there, we still want our school, we still want our Church, and we are not changing our minds. Then the meeting went on they said, 'well, we'll break away from them', so we did. So, we didn't get any money. There was Mill goin', cutting all the cedar, they were just finishing off, after the band split up and they shut the Mill down and the ladies, and elders' society started rummage sales, cook sales, bake sales, anything to raise money. The whole of the bands said it's all our labour, we'll build it, and it's still standing. And when the Department seen that, they said 'well, we'll put a school up', it's that one [school] on that side, and when that got too small, they had to build this one [directing my attention to new school].⁶³⁸

Archie carried forward this experience of working towards ensuring Aboriginal-run education to his time as Chief, when he further initiated efforts to create the first Band-operated-school on Seabird Island. "After 10 years of having their children integrated into the Agassiz Public School System, parents from Seabird Island petition[ed] the Band to open its own Band-operated community school. From that petition, the vision of *Lalme' Iwesawtexw* would be born,

⁶³⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

and in 1980 that vision would come to life.”⁶³⁹ Archie went beyond simply endorsing the initiative politically by also donating land passed on to him by Mary Charles to be used by the Seabird Island Band to build their first school. Archie recalled that “when she passed away [in 1974], I gave that land away to the school, like a monument for her.”⁶⁴⁰ Building the school wasn’t without challenges, as Archie reflects:

[The neighbouring town of] Agassiz was mad ’cause we went and built our own school, and all this time, they were getting taxes from the railroad [to be potentially designated for the Seabird Island Band] and it was going into their school. When I found out, there was no more of that! We started a war!⁶⁴¹

Archie recollected the negotiations he undertook to redirect funds to Seabird Island, one of many “fights” he took on to secure economic resources for his community while serving as Chief: “So, we used to hold our meetings over at Harrison Hotsprings Hotel... we had CPR there [at the meeting], pipeline...”⁶⁴² He recalls instructing the lawyer representing him and the Band to:

‘Tell them how much money we want.’ ‘Money?’ he said ‘you want money?’ They had been using that land for 50 years, 40 for sure... and since then all the taxes had been going to Agassiz. We couldn’t get back taxes; I said ‘from this day on, this money comes down here’.⁶⁴³

In 1991, *Lalme’ Iwesawtexw*, meaning “Mary Charles House of Learning” in *Halq’eméylem*, opened. Building on the shared belief in the value of education so central to Archie and Mary, the new *Lalme’ Iwesawtexw* High School opened in 2009. During its

⁶³⁹ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶⁴⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

construction in 2007, Archie and I spoke of education during one of our discussions at his house.

Reflecting while looking out the window, he said:

We should be fighting to get them [youth] all the way [through to graduation]. They go and get jobs, they work in stores, but that's not a very good paying job I don't think. I still haven't figured that one out. I think a better curriculum is a good start. Especially today, it's like in the residential school, they didn't care if you learned something, just as long as their job was done.

As stated on the Seabird Island website, “*Lalme' Iwesawtexw* School provides both quality B.C. Curriculum for (First Nations) Kindergarten to Grade 12 students”, a curriculum “which fosters and promotes cultural values and the *Halq'eméylem* language taught by B.C. Certified teachers.”⁶⁴⁴ The high school is also a great success in part because it offers a unique program to encourage enrollment:

Many First Nations High School students had children, or were pregnant and because of that many felt that they could not be a parent and attend school so they dropped out. The Early Childhood Programs that *Lalme' Iwesawtexw* partnered opened the Young Parents Program within the high school itself. The program offered students the freedom to complete their education while their children were safe and could be visited while the parents were on break or at lunch. The program also taught parenting skills, and in many cases gave new moms the opportunity to continue breastfeeding their child.⁶⁴⁵

In 2009, Seabird Island achieved another milestone in reserve-based education. After their many partnerships with universities and colleges to run programs within the community, the Band began to operate Seabird College, offering courses that year.⁶⁴⁶ Courses are varied and diverse and include: welding, Aboriginal tourism, *halq'eméylem* and office administration.⁶⁴⁷ Archie's reflections illustrate that he was a proponent of education as well as a culturally and

⁶⁴⁴ Seabird Island timeline <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/lalme-iwesawtexw-elementary-and-secondary-school> (download date September 12, 2013).

⁶⁴⁵ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/our-story> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶⁴⁶ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶⁴⁷ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca> (download date March 18, 2015).

socially relevant curriculum, and this has become a great success for the Seabird Island community, as well as part of his (and his mother`s) enduring legacy.

Archie`s strong desire to lead his community towards continued self-sufficiency and autonomy was exemplified in many of his initiatives as Chief. He worked tirelessly to ensure the continued use and development of Seabird Island reserve land so as to create employment for community members and generate revenue. His specific contribution is outlined on the Seabird Island website:

Under his supervision in 1978, Seabird Island would open the Seabird Island Café. It was the stepping stone for many of our First Nations people to gain the skills they needed to seek further employment – many of which sought and gained employment at the Band Office. Also during this time the Seabird Island Café kitchen would be expanded, a maintenance shop would be constructed, two sub-divisions would be completed, and a convenience store would be opened. The convenience store built in 1985 would receive a paved parking lot in 1998, and it would also be renovated to install gas pumps and to offer four rentable rooms. The renovations would attract tractor-trailer drivers and travellers passing by.⁶⁴⁸

Archie`s conviction about the importance of self-sufficiency and development for the Seabird Island community translated into a priority during his time as Chief.

Farming and Gardening: Stewardship and Economic Development

Archie`s work as a farmer and the importance he placed on the use of Seabird Island land for agriculture set a precedent in First Nations` land use. As discussed in Chapter Three, while he did not gain a diploma from his time spent at Kamloops Indian Residential School, he retained knowledge of farming that they taught him and he carried this learning forward to contribute to improving the quality of his life and the life of his community.

⁶⁴⁸ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/our-story> (download date May 12, 2013).

The correlation between Residential school attendance and farming is made explicit in the work of historian Sarah Carter. Documenting Indian agents and Indian Residential School administrators in the Canadian prairies, she notes that they maintained a focus on “retrogression” of graduating students, who, according to Indian Commissioner David Laird in 1905, “were discouraged from employment in cities and towns where they are [more] exposed to intoxicating liquor and other temptations than on reserves. Male graduates were to farm on the reserves and female graduates were to be suitable helpmates to prevent retrogression.”⁶⁴⁹ In Archie’s case, he carried on with farming and gardening throughout the course of his life, deriving personal joy from it as well as prioritizing it as a form of economic development in his years as Chief. While Archie did not recall to me the exact year he started farming, in 1972, shortly after Archie took office as Chief, Seabird Island began operating its own cattle farm “which offered employment to Seabird Island Band Members and provided economic growth for the community.”⁶⁵⁰

Historian Amber Kostuchenko’s paper “The Unique Experiences of Stó:lō Farmers: An Investigation into Native Agriculture in British Columbia, 1875-1916” (2000), adds to Sarah Carter’s critical analysis of Native farmers’ experiences by providing a cultural and regional perspective on Stó:lō agricultural management and reaction to government policy at the turn of the 21st century. Kostuchenko’s research involved oral history interviews with Stó:lō community members, including Archie. She cites an earlier interview with Archie, conducted by scholars Ruben Ware and Albert Phillips, in which he gave his reason for the disappearance of the

⁶⁴⁹ Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 240.

⁶⁵⁰ <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date May 3, 2013).

Seabird dairy farms: “government regulation of the industry in the 1940s.”⁶⁵¹ She notes that “(v)ery few Stó:lō dairy farmers survived the changes in regulation. While the same changes would have affected small dairy farmers in general, they were likely better able to cope than Stó:lō farmers, as they had access to capital through loans, which the Stó:lō did not.”⁶⁵² Despite these challenges, Kostuchenko found that: “Stó:lō appeared to have much success in dairying, in particular Richard Malloway who was the last Indian dairy farmer by the 1970s...”, for which Archie suggested to her a possible explanation for this success: “cows were pastured in the forest on Seabird Island thus eliminating the difficult job of clearing the land.”⁶⁵³

Archie told me that the best year for farming at Seabird Island was 1973, when there was 3000 head of sheep and 300 head of beef cattle, of which he had 65 head of his own.⁶⁵⁴ However, after five years of success using 1900 acres of land for beef cattle, the price of beef plummeted in 1975, which took its toll.⁶⁵⁵ In addition to his own efforts in farming, Archie was also an avid gardener, growing vegetables that Tina would preserve. The family continues to maintain a cellar full of canned vegetables, usually enough to last for a few years. While he took joy in his garden, it was not so much a hobby as it was a means of being self-sufficient and maintaining a traditional food diet. He took the time to teach Zack how to tend to his large garden and as Zack recalls, Archie was routinely out gardening and weeding even in the last summer of his life at

⁶⁵¹ Reuben Ware and Albert Phillips, *Stalo History Fieldnotes*, Sto:lo Nation Archives, Uncatalogued: 66 cited in Amber Kostuchenko. “The Unique Experiences of Sto:lo Farmers: An Investigation into Native Agriculture in British Columbia, 1875-1916.” (Unpublished report 2000), 35.

⁶⁵² Kostuchenko, “Unique Experiences”, 35.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁶⁵⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

age 88.⁶⁵⁶ Archie described how it was at Residential school that he acquired the knowledge of farming that he would carry forward in to his later life and promote while he was Chief:

Yeah, that's one thing I learned there [at Kamloops IRS]. Since we only had class two hours a day and the rest was on the farm. We had a cow to look after, a horse. No tractor, everything was team. They had acres and acres of land, hay ground. They grew all their own vegetables, so we had to look after that... The only thing I give them credit for is to learn how to live... Ah, well, I think all schools should do that – a couple hours a day of work. But the new parents now-a-days just go to the store and buy their stuff. At one time everybody had a cellar. There was no such thing as freezers, but we had underground cellars to keep our vegetables and things like that. I think it's gonna have to come back to that.⁶⁵⁷

Archie's positive inclusion of agricultural skills acquired at Kamloops IRS in his later work life is supported by historian Sarah Carter's thesis in her work *Lost Harvests*; namely that government policy overlooked positive Indian response to agriculture, as did historiography on the topic. Carter attests that the common assumption that Indians and agriculture were irreconcilable is an observation that differed little from perceptions of Victorian-era Canadians, and has been reflected in histories written until very recently. She argues that, "equally obscured and forgotten had been the role [of government] in restricting and undermining reserve agriculture."⁶⁵⁸

Social Assistance: "It Killed Everything Here."

Archie held the conviction that government social assistance should only be used as a secondary support to the continued use of local resources to generate capital and wealth.

Archie's belief that social assistance in his community was most effectively utilized when it was

⁶⁵⁶ Zack Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

⁶⁵⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁶⁵⁸ Carter, *Lost Harvests*, 258.

supplementary is echoed by historian John Lutz's concept of "moditional economies":

Indigenous hybrid economic systems that combine modern capitalist practices and traditional subsistence-prestige activities. Lutz's work further illustrates how Aboriginal people both accommodated and resisted aspects of European culture, including the social welfare system – by combining welfare with other economic activities such as emerging wage labour and subsistence work. Archie maintained a strong belief in self-reliance, sharing his values with community members, particularly youth: "I try to tell them that the social assistance killed everything here. I ask what are they gonna do if they cut that money off? Starve to death!"⁶⁵⁹ The cycle of dependence, Archie believed, had its origins in the inter-war years:

Well, go back to '27, '28 and '29, it was bad, what they called the "hungry '30s." You had to grow stuff to keep going. Well, you could pick out the lazy ones, that's for sure. You know, because at that time, the Department of Indian Affairs, they supplied the seed, all you had to do was put it in the ground and I think some of them still got some left in their woodshed. It certainly taught the people how to live though, you know. Now they won't do nothing. I have a hard time getting them to weed my garden when I ask.⁶⁶⁰

The reason this type of apathy exists, he concludes is "Social Assistance, free dollars, free bucks. We got acres here [to use]..."⁶⁶¹ In order to combat the impact of the social welfare system on the lives of his community, Archie nurtured and developed a number of farming and harvesting initiatives to support the community's use of its arable land throughout his time as Chief. Archie's efforts laid the groundwork for a number of land resource initiatives that continue to this day, including:

(t)he harvesting of 128,000 lbs. of hazelnuts from the Seabird Island Hazelnut Orchard which had been planted in 1989. The Orchard is still operational to this day. By 2001

⁶⁵⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁶⁶⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

Seabird Island would own and operate the largest sheep farming operation in British Columbia, and one of the largest in North America with 1,282 ewes, 183 yearlings, 3 lambs, and 35 rams. It would stay in operation until 2003.⁶⁶²

Archie recalled that before the introduction of state social assistance “we used to work, everybody would go to work and now they won’t.”⁶⁶³ His suggestion for a solution to dependency on social assistance was “Well, go back to the old days. If you don’t put in a garden, you’ll starve to death...”⁶⁶⁴ Archie’s perspective was “they [the band] should use the land here before they sit back and count their money.”⁶⁶⁵ Archie’s self-reliance and conviction that the land is a resource that is to be both cared for and used to generate wealth and capital can also be viewed as an act of resistance to colonialism, deepening his traditional grounding and leading his community into revenue-based initiatives using traditional practices. Archie’s actions are corroborated by the conclusions of historian John Lutz, who declares this type of strategy, one of resistance and accommodation was not uncommon among B.C. First Nations: “the state has achieved dominance without hegemony.”⁶⁶⁶ However, he adds: “that there has been no subjugation, no capitulation is clear in the artistic, political, and spiritual expressions that are widespread in Indigenous communities across Canada today.”⁶⁶⁷

Protection and Promotion of Stó:lō Aboriginal Right, Title and Culture

⁶⁶² <http://www.seabirdisland.ca/page/historic-timeline> (download date May 3, 2013).

⁶⁶³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, March 12, 2009.

⁶⁶⁶ Lutz, *Makúk*, 308.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

Archie witnessed immense change in his time as Chief. In the 28 years he led his people, he saw the further entrenchment of the *Indian Act* electoral system and the emergence of the B.C. Treaty Process. As current Chief Clem Seymour described, while Archie was Chief, he oversaw the development of a governance model for Seabird Island that sets forth the band and council powers and authorities. While commonplace now within many First Nations band-level governmental organizations, in the 1970s such internal accountability measures were highly innovative and reflected Archie's intention to lead the community with honesty and integrity. In this sense, he was integrating, within the new institutionalized model of *Indian Act* governance, a quality of traditional leadership - leading by example and consensus. Archie witnessed the structure of Stó:lō political organizations shift and change throughout his career, as Seymour describes:

Archie was part of the group called the Chilliwack Area Council in 1970s before I started. I came in 1993. From there we sort of separated and became our own, eventual Stó:lō Tribal Council. So he was part of that. I used to 'walk with' Archie to those meetings and he introduced me to everyone. Chilliwack Area Council and Stó:lō Nation unified, then in 2004 we all separated. Different ways of getting there [to self-determination, self-governance] but we're all going in the same direction.⁶⁶⁸

Archie was also part of the political scene during the newly emergent B.C. treaty process in the 1990s. Archie maintained concerns about the treaty process and in particular concerns about the early agreements B.C. First Nations, such as the Sechelt community,⁶⁶⁹ had accepted. He expressed his sentiments in a 1997 interview:

⁶⁶⁸ Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

⁶⁶⁹"Sechelt has been exercising self-government since 1986 when it endorsed the first self-governance agreement in Canada" <http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/sechelt.php> (download date July 16, 2012). The Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act is an example of a municipal-style self-government Agreement "...[in which] governance powers are delegated by an act of Parliament and an act of the BC Legislature and have no constitutional protection.

Like I said before I didn't like it, I don't know what is down the road for the next generations to come if we are making the wrong move now, or they may get a better deal 20 or 30 years from now, and us doing it now may be spoiling it for them people, and I don't like the idea of doing that. I even tell my people here...I don't know whether the money sounds good but once you settle for something there's no going back, you can't opt out, or if it is a mistake, then it is a bad one, and I don't suffer from it, it is my Grandchildren that are going to pay for it, and I don't like that part of it.⁶⁷⁰

Archie's fears about sustaining the growth of his community as a result of the treaty process can be understood as a form of what anthropologist Adrian Tanner calls "symbolic politics." One example of this kind of politics includes First Nations' concern over the development of treaty packages that will provide an opportunity for their communities to sustain growth and maintain stewardship of the land. Ongoing challenges in creating mutual understanding (and consequently sustainable policy) between communities and government stakeholders illustrate the limitations communities face while engaging in the treaty process. As Tanner points out, such limitations are inherently political, and "...involves demands made by Indians - demands which the government does not or cannot understand or respond to, and to which it only replies with offers of items other than those being demanded... it is clear to the Indians themselves that their demands are not actually up for negotiation."⁶⁷¹ A second kind of politics that emerges between First Nations and the State "pertains to an Indian group's negotiation for and attempts to make gains, but within the dominant society's own formulation of an issue."⁶⁷²

The *Sechelt Self Government Act* was established prior to the BCTC's existence."

http://www.bctreaty.net/files/issues_selfgovern.php (download date July 16, 2012).

⁶⁷⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

⁶⁷¹ Tanner, *The Politics of Indianness*, 32.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

“Symbolic politics” can be clearly observed in the subversion by colonial governments of existing cultural and political structures and practices fundamental to the full inclusion and participation of Aboriginal people in the contemporary political sphere. Tanner’s work illustrates how the complexities of contemporary Aboriginal political life – in which community leaders are forced to straddle traditional leadership and *Indian Act*-assigned authority – are a result of how Aboriginal people are situated within dominant cultural and social systems.

Archie’s perspective of the Treaty process is clearly illustrated in views he shared in a 2002 interview. Archie advocated for a nonpartisan approach – one which envisioned Stó:lō people as a single community, regardless of band or tribal affiliation - to the negotiation for Aboriginal Rights and Title, something he believed treaties could potentially restrict: “I would like to see more people working together. We are a Nation; we should start acting as a Nation. All of the land from Yale to Kwantlen is Stó:lō Nation. It is *S’ólh Téméxw*.”⁶⁷³

It is important to note again that as was the case of many Stó:lō veterans, including Archie, military experience directly impacted his successful political life, and more broadly his leadership role within his family and community. He undertook many “fights” with the colonial administration. He recalled his approach as a newly elected Chief:

When I come on, I went after all of them. I had a good lawyer, from England, and he had worked for Indian Affairs; he was that lawyer for Indian Affairs [Graham Allan], and I said to him ‘you’re not doing anything good down there, so get up here!’ (Laughing) ‘Ok’, he says.’... We went back over their books that they had and somebody had Ok’d pipeline to come through for nothing... “It was about the use of the gas line; they wouldn’t pay nobody taxes for going over it. They cut across our land. What do you call it...CPR tried get Hydro to move it, but they wouldn’t. Well, I told them ‘you move your

⁶⁷³ Archie Charles, interview *Sqwelqwels Ye Stó:lō*, October, 2002.

power line off our reserve over there and over the mountain”. So, they chipped in for the school.⁶⁷⁴

He recalled in further detail fighting to have Rights and Title to Seabird Island honoured by external organization and funds fairly redirected to his community:

I can remember fighting CPR, B.C. Hydro, the gas line. The gas line come through in 1950 - they never asked nobody, just dropped the pipes in. Then, when I became Chief I found out what they did and I went after them and I got a million bucks for the fifty years. Fifty years! A million dollars for fifty years! We built a school right over top of it and I said I want you to remove that pipe, cross over above the island and go down the other side to get away from it. They did it! But they said they wasn't gonna deal with me anymore! Everybody got a chunk of what they were owed that time!...CPR had to pay taxes, highway. Hydro was the only one, they pay in lieu of taxes. It goes towards the [Seabird Island] school – I think that's a good thing there.⁶⁷⁵

As noted in Chapter Four, along with other Stó:lō veterans, Archie was a stern protector of Stó:lō Rights and Title. While he may have been a man of few words, his actions revealed he would engage in negotiations but did not hesitate to protest when necessary. Archie was one of the political leaders who led the 1976 occupation of Coqueleetza, the site of the former residential school and hospital. Stó:lō Grand Chief Clarence “Kat” Pennier, a long-time colleague and friend of Archie, described his role:

He and I were at the occupation of Coqueleetza in 1976, he was Chief of Seabird at the time, and he was, I guess, the so-called leader of the occupation, so he was front and center with the RCMP and other people who were interested in trying to get us to quit the occupation, so... And I also was a Chief too, so that's where I got to know him and it's always been a pleasure knowing him even though he's sort of a quiet person. He doesn't really get up and speak for minutes on end, he likes to be very short and brief and he'll just say what needs to be said and sit down, you know. So he's been a proponent for Aboriginal partisan rights issues and trying to make sure that we're going to come to a

⁶⁷⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

resolution with the government in terms of recognizing our title to our territory and also receiving some of the benefits for our people.⁶⁷⁶

Archie demonstrated his commitment to protecting resources for the greater Stó:lō community and future generations in varied ways, depending on what was most relevant at the time. His effectiveness as a steward and community leader was best reflected in his ability to adapt and resist as needed. His strategies for leadership and stewardship in relation to his hereditary fishing site in the Fraser Canyon will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Engaged Cultural Revival: Seabird Island Festival

In 1969, Archie and Tina envisioned and subsequently introduced the first Seabird Island First Nations' Festival. The festival promoted sports and recreation, including traditional Stó:lō practices of war canoe racing and "*slahal*" gambling tournaments. It also included a number of sports tournaments, such as soccer and ball hockey. The Festival is a celebration of First Nations' culture, but is also open to the non-Aboriginal public. As a strong proponent of a traditional food diet, including harvested foods such as berries, Archie incorporated and placed salmon at the heart of the Festival in a variety of ways. He took charge of and maintained the salmon BBQ pit throughout the history of the Festival from its inception in 1969 to 2010, the year he passed away. (see **Figure 5.4**) Clem Seymour reflects on Archie's contribution:

Archie brought back to Seabird our canoe days, our festival days. 39 years as cook at it. I remember the early years I was playing soccer but he was the one he brought it back. Today, the festival is in its 44th year with thousands of people from across North America who attend the games and over 220 teams participate.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁶ Clarence "Kat" Pennier, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

⁶⁷⁷ Clem Seymour, interview with Meagan Gough, July 30, 2008.

The festival's success is a demonstration of Archie's unique means of revitalizing and promoting Stó:lō cultural and history through engagement; by celebrating traditional ways for both Stó:lō and non Stó:lō people alike.

Internal Recognition: "Grand Chief"

On June 11 1993, Archie Charles, along with his half-brother and Chief Joe Gabriel, were nominated by the Stó:lō Tribal Council leadership as the first ever Stó:lō Tribal Council Chiefs to hold the title of "Grand Chief". Former Chief of the nearby Stó:lō community of Cheam, Sid Douglas (*Sru-Ets-Lan-Ough*), also Archie's nephew, describes the origin and meaning of the term "Grand Chief" bestowed upon Archie and Joe Gabriel.

When they use that name it's for not only the community but all the other communities in the area. Over the years they felt the time, service and accomplishments of those Chiefs over time they needed to be recognized. You know Seabird, part of Archie's leadership is about how Seabird got built up under him as Chief.⁶⁷⁸

Douglas explains that while Archie and Joe Gabriel were the first *Indian Act*-elected Chiefs to have such a title bestowed on them, that:

It's probably an evolution of the spokesperson for the band. In the late 1800s, early 1900s - when they went to congregations, where there was a lot of Chiefs they always had one or two spokespersons for all the Chiefs in the area or area. So when they went to a big gathering, these spokespeople knew what they had to say because that's what everybody agreed they were going to say. I guess that's something that evolved, you know like [certain Chiefs] they speak at these big forums and a lot of what they're saying is what is discussed at the tribal level.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁸ Sid Douglas, interview with Meagan Gough, July 25, 2008.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

Poignantly, Archie remarked of this accomplishment and recognition: “I don’t know too much about it myself. I guess it’s the way you operate a Band.”⁶⁸⁰ Archie retired as Chief in 1998, (see **Figure 5.5**) declining the opportunity to run for re-election, believing that it was time for someone else to do the job.

External Validation: Recipient of the Order of Canada

On August 28, 2009, (coincidentally, on his 87th birthday), Archie was honoured with the Order of Canada in recognition of his sustained contribution to community development of Seabird Island. In another twist of fate, it was fellow Stó:lō community member, the Honourable Judge and Lieutenant Governor Steven Point, who would present him with the honour in his community of Seabird Island. His response to the honour was to thank his Creator for the opportunity: “[laughs] Well that guy upstairs had something to do with it. Oh I got honoured for it. I was supposed to go to Ottawa but I didn't think I could make it.”⁶⁸¹ The ceremony, for which hundreds of people gathered in the Seabird Island gym, was a moment of acknowledgement and recognition for the contribution Archie made to the development of his community. But more than that, it was also an acknowledgement of all Stó:lō people, their history, their struggles and a celebration of their survival and successes. Two years earlier, I had nominated Archie for the Order of Canada at the suggestion of scholar Julie Cruikshank, who had previously nominated individuals who had collaborated with her in her work. When we received the notification that he was going to be a recipient, Archie was physically unwell. As a

⁶⁸⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

⁶⁸¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

result, the Governor General's office mindfully broke protocol and let him be presented with the award in his home community.

I was deeply honoured by the demonstration of Archie's inclusive, integrative viewpoint when, on the day of the award ceremony, he asked me to participate as a member of his family. Archie, Tina, her daughter Caroline Credico, biological granddaughter Rose, grandson Kelsey Charles and step-great grandson Zack Joe, and I were covered with blankets and were given cedar headbands to wear. We were led into the gymnasium by traditional drummers, circled the gym, which was filled with hundreds of people and finally came to rest standing on a bed of cedar boughs. Accompanied by Mounties, Steven Point bestowed the award on Archie. (see **Figure 5.6**)

Part of what made the Order of Canada ceremony so special to Archie and other Stó:lō attendees was the acknowledgement paid to Tina by multiple speakers, who observed the value of her contribution despite her continual desire to remain "in the background". I can recall that, on the day of the ceremony, Tina - in her typical humble way - wished not to be seated "where everyone would be looking at me." However, afterwards she stated that she enjoyed immensely being hugged and kissed by all the attendees who filed in at the end of the ceremony to greet her and Archie. "I've never been kissed so much in my life!" she remarked with a giggle.

Archie, the adopted father and grandfather of so many Stó:lō children, "took me in" as a non-Stó:lō "outsider." I was invited to participate along with family "insiders" because of our mutual bonds of affection and common goals. The privileged role he allowed me to occupy within his family, bonds which his other family members and I have nurtured and maintained after his passing, says much about him. It demonstrates Archie's typically inclusive, embracing

vision and practice aligning himself with those whose heart, work, or ways he related to, regardless of their skin colour or social, cultural or political beliefs. It shows his bold and genuine personal agency.

Inclusion of “chosen” outsiders may have also been a traditional practice that resists government control of limited designations of who can be counted as an insider (e.g., biological relatives as represented on band lists as one example). Archie maintained relationships akin to the roles of close biological family members with numerous people, and in doing so, powerfully carried forward the teachings of his ancestors- particularly the spirit of inclusion taught to him by his adoption by Mary and Dave Charles and from his cross-cultural experiences in residential school and the military.

Conclusion

Contemporary *Indian Act*-elected Chiefs must wrestle with, and have been compromised by, the inherent stresses and conflicts presented by trying to lead using existing hereditary systems, practices and protocols within the imposed electoral system. Throughout his life, Archie successfully implemented a strategy of leadership (both in public and private realms) that engaged tradition in flexible and innovative ways. Always a pragmatist, he listened, then assessed and utilized diverse tools to achieve practical results. As such, he was highly adaptive and able to be successful in a time of rapid change, incorporating tradition and modernity in appropriate measure in all he did. A steady, calm nature, an ethos based on the value of hard work, gratitude and a leadership style in both public and private realms of showing not telling who you are or judging how others should be, allowed him to act in accordance with, and respond with resistance to, colonial policies and programs as he saw fit. His approach to

leadership and management of resources characterized by his strategy of “protection via engagement and education” helped bridge communication gaps and generate understanding between Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō people while also mediating conflict within the Stó:lō community. On one occasion I asked Archie about the responsibilities that are attached to Stó:lō ancestral names. The words of wisdom he spoke concisely summarize his legacy, the gift of his knowledge to Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō people alike: “try to help people and don’t say “you owe me for it”, do it for nothing, just be good in life.”⁶⁸²

⁶⁸² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

CHAPTER SIX: ARCHIE CHARLES AS *SIA:TELEQ* – ENACTING HEREDITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE STÓ:LŦ FIVE MILE FISHERY



“What took you so long?” Archie joked, as daughter Rose, granddaughter Natasha and I arrived at fishcamp in July, 2008. He had hiked up the gravel cutback to the spot on the side of the TransCanada highway where we had parked, walking with us as we hiked down with supplies for our stay.

Archie’s warm and hospitable greeting of us at the road, despite his ailing health, was typical of the attitude and language he used while assuming the caretaking and leadership role of *Sia:teleq*: serving to oversee the activities at his hereditary fishcamp. Archie’s successful promotion of Stó:lŦ Rights and Title to the Fraser Canyon fishery using both education and inclusion – of sharing – has transformed the lives of many people and has helped to close the gap between Stó:lŦ and *Xwelítem*, while reiterating the sacred value of salmon in Stó:lŦ life.

The Fraser Canyon is a unique geographic place. Stó:lō *sxwōxwiyám* (legendary oral histories) and *sqwélqwel* (personal family histories) demonstrate that, since time immemorial, Stó:lō families have seasonally occupied the region during the summer months to fish for salmon and make use of the dry climate and warm breezes that provide ideal conditions for preserving the catch using the wind-drying technique. Archie Charles described how the breeze stays low to the water, making it favourable to dry fish: “Well, it’s narrow there, so when you’re at our camp and you look up to where the Douglas’s [family fishing spot next to his] are and look up at the trees, and they don’t even move. It [the breeze] just follows along the water.”⁶⁸³

Currently in the 21st century, the Stó:lō *Xwexwilmexw* Treaty Association, the Stó:lō Tribal Council, and the greater Stó:lō community as represented by independent (non-politically affiliated) Stó:lō First Nations work individually and sometimes in concert to assert Stó:lō self-determination over cultural resources in *S’ólh Téméxw*. A key area of interest and dispute relates to the historic Canyon salmon fishery, particularly in the Five Mile Fishery between Yale and Sawmill Creek.⁶⁸⁴ Efforts to establish “jurisdiction” within current treaty negotiations that clarify Stó:lō access to, use of, control over and occupation⁶⁸⁵ of the Canyon, its fishery and associated

⁶⁸³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁶⁸⁴ As noted in the introductory chapter, my employment with Stó:lō SRRMC as a researcher involved conducting oral history interviews with Stó:lō fishing families to assist with updating maps of the Canyon fishing sites. I interviewed approximately 20 people. The goal of these interviews was to add breadth to hereditary information related to Stó:lō access, use, control over and occupation of the Canyon fishery. Working interviewing Stó:lō fishermen, including Archie, to learn of their connection to the Canyon was deeply enriching and informs this work in many ways.

⁶⁸⁵ For the purposes of this chapter, “occupation” refers to the sustained and prolonged presence of Stó:lō people in hereditary fishing spots expressed via oral history, family genealogy and archaeological evidence. “Use” can be

resources are contested; and this process will have an indelible impact on the lives of Stó:lō people for generations to come. Indeed, in the summer of 2013, members of a family from a reserve near Chilliwack were publically stating at community forums and on social media that Archie and his partner Tina had no right to “their” fishing site in the Canyon and that Tina and Archie’s living relatives must all leave. Archie and Tina’s family, however, rejected this version of their *sqwélqwel* and steadfastly remained in their fishcamp.

Ongoing efforts of scholars and the greater Stó:lō community to validate Stó:lō collective and individual family claims to the Canyon fishery in relation to the overlapping Treaty claim of the Yale First Nation have proven useful but insufficient. It is my contention that this inadequacy is in part a result of the historical information being ineffectively contextualized within academic literature. In particular, there is insufficient attention paid within scholarly interpretations to the existing depth and breadth of the hereditary and cultural system of resource management and conflict resolution.

In this chapter I aspire to provide an historical overview of the geo-cultural and social dimensions of resource management at the Five Mile Fishery. I seek to accomplish this by historicizing the means by which Stó:lō occupation, use, control of and access to the fishery is understood and enacted, particularly via the caretaking authority ascribed to the *Sia:teleq*, a

understood to refer to the ways in which Stó:lō people interact with the Canyon environment (including both fishing and non-fishing activities), the impact of this interaction and the cultural protocols associated with this symbiotic relationship between man and nature. “Access” here refers to both the cultural systems that govern individual, hereditary and non-Stó:lō use of riverine resources, as well as changing methods of gaining physical access to fishing spots. Lastly, “control” refers to culturally accepted methods of caretaking of the Canyon resources that are essential to the development of ethical, sustainable and conscientious policy, practice and regulation of the Canyon fishery.

hereditary leadership role assumed by Archie and other heads of fishing families. This will contribute to the recorded knowledge aimed at creating further understanding among Stó:lō families, neighbouring First Nations and newcomers.

The second goal of this chapter is to present and contextualize both Archie's understanding of Stó:lō caretaking principles outlined in the *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* and the work of geographer Karen Albers, whose oral history interviews with Stó:lō people about the topic of caretaking form the core historiography of this topic. Historian Keith Carlson observes that “meaningful resolution” of the conflicts surrounding regulation, use and management of the Fraser Canyon fishery, “must reflect cultural practices” – something he contends can only occur “when family histories are known and effectively communicated.”⁶⁸⁶

The third goal of this chapter is to communicate the family histories and pre-existing hereditary system of resource management in a manner that accommodates contested ways of knowing and contextualizes local family histories within the tensions emerging from colonial regulatory regimes.

“Xóllmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát” Archie said to me while looking over the water of the Fraser River rushing through the Canyon.⁶⁸⁷ He translated this as “*We have to look after everything that belongs to us*”, a key Stó:lō caretaking principle regarding cultural and natural resource management. Given the central importance of this “law” and associated practices to Stó:lō culture, a key question facing Stó:lō people and the newcomers in their territory is: how can this principle best be integrated into ethical, meaningful and sustainable policy and

⁶⁸⁶ Keith Thor Carlson and Sarah Eustace, *The ‘True Spirit of Original Intent’ of Fraser Canyon Fishing Reserves* (Chilliwack: Unpublished Paper provided to Stó:lō Nation, 1999), 33.

⁶⁸⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

management practices, particularly in treaty negotiations? One way is to consider how a highly regarded leader like Archie integrated cultural principles of caretaking and their associated protocols into practice, linking traditional caretaking to sustainability and conflict resolution in the postcolonial world. Archie Charles, along with other Stó:lō family leaders, occupied the traditional cultural role of a *Sia:teleq* – defined as a master fisherman or fisherwoman⁶⁸⁸ who oversees the family “business” of co-ordinating fishing activities at hereditary Canyon fishing grounds by working to ensure all family and extended family are provided equal access to and use of the “fishing spot”⁶⁸⁹ or “fishcamp.”⁶⁹⁰ Despite incursions from colonial forces and intercommunity conflict, Archie was highly respected among his family, other Stó:lō fishing families, neighbouring First Nations in competition for the resource as well as by *Xwelítem* involved in the fishery, such as representatives of the Department of Fisheries (“DFO”) and various scholars. I demonstrate how he successfully enacted the traditional role of a *Sia:teleq* in a

⁶⁸⁸Stó:lō Elders Rita Pete and Birdie Peters are two examples of women who assume a *Sia:teleq* role. See Amanda Fehr’s interviews with Rita Pete in Amanda Fehr, “Relationships: A Study of Memory, Change, and Identity at a Place Called I:yem,” *The University of the Fraser Valley Research Review*, 2: 2 (2008), 9-35.

⁶⁸⁹ Historian Keith Thor Carlson explains that terms ascribed by Stó:lō people to describe their hereditary fishing grounds in the Canyon are fluid and historically and culturally sensitive in nature. The continually evolving terms provide insight into how Aboriginal Rights and Title is understood by Stó:lō people: “One hundred years ago, Stó:lō fishing ‘spots’ were universally understood to mean the craggy rock outcroppings and level bluffs immediately adjacent to the swirling eddies where salmon paused to rest while journeying to their upriver spawning grounds. Today, however, most people consider the eddies themselves to be their owned fishing property.” (Keith Thor Carlson, “History Wars: Considering Contemporary Fishing Disputes” In *A Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre: 2001), 58.

⁶⁹⁰ The lexicon of the term “fishcamp” commonly used by Stó:lō people refers both to a geographic and social space occupied and associated with fishing.

contemporary setting through his leadership strategy of “protection through education and inclusion.” He did so by providing hereditary leadership in the Fraser Canyon fishery, through his extensive knowledge of genealogy and by his leadership skills, based on showing not telling who he was.

Consequently, a fourth goal of this chapter is to demonstrate his success by drawing upon illustrative examples, such as his bequeathing of his fishing spot as an Elders’ fishcamp for those Stó:lō people who did not have a fishing site of their own, his hosting of a meeting with DFO and Stó:lō leaders at his camp and his inclusive teaching style in which he provided Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō people access to and use of his hereditary site. Given his success, what teachings and lessons does this approach provide to those involved in the resolution of conflict on the Fraser River in a contemporary setting?

By drawing upon my oral history interviews with Archie Charles and his family members between 2006-2010, as well as family records, relevant genealogical materials, ethnographic sources and newspapers, I will explain the Stó:lō cultural practice of maintaining the hereditary system by which fishing sites are managed and document the means by which Stó:lō people have occupied, used and accessed the Canyon fishing sites over time. I also share reflections drawn from my own time spent with Archie and his family at fishcamp over the fishing seasons of 2007, 2008, and 2009, prior to his passing in 2010. Incorporating my reflections of time spent at the Charles-Jack fishcamp adds to the work of anthropologists Keith Basso, Julie Cruikshank, Peter Nabakov, historian Keith Carlson, and others whose work on Indigenous understandings of place stress the deep relationship between places, history and identity. In this way, we come to see how the land itself carries teachings and is a source of knowledge and power to interact with.

Archie's *sqwélqwel* narrative reveals that not only is Stó:lō knowledge born out of the land itself, it is understood most fully through interaction with such places and thereby has potential as a strategy for understanding and resolving conflict. Archie's style of leadership, based on enacting a strategy of protection by education and inclusion, shows how important it is to understand the ways in which innovation and tradition are simultaneously engaged in pragmatic and meaningful ways by Indigenous peoples in response to colonial intervention.

Ultimately, I argue that a greater understanding of the principles of resource management and sustainability Archie utilized can be utilized to support the resolution of conflicts that arise in the Canyon between families, Nations and newcomers and between Stó:lō and colonial resource regulatory agents like the DFO. While there are multiple hereditary leaders who manage their fishing spots, as a widely recognized *Siyá:m* and *Sia:teleq*, Archie's reflections provide an illuminating, timely and highly regarded generational and cultural perspective on the integral nature of fishing in the Fraser Canyon for Stó:lō people as a means of establishing Stó:lō Rights and Title in a rapidly changing world.

“Mental Mapping” of the Fraser Canyon by Stó:lō Peoples: *Sx̣wọ̄x̣wiyám* and *Sqwélqwel*

In order to better understand the caretaking responsibilities family leaders like Archie maintain, it is essential to appreciate the genesis of Stó:lō connection to the Canyon. As illustrated in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, “(t)he physical presence of Aboriginal

people within the deglaciaded landscape of *S'ólh Téméxw* can be traced by approximately 10,000 years through archaeological record.”⁶⁹¹ Furthermore,

A great amount of time has elapsed since initial Aboriginal occupation of *S'ólh Téméxw* – more than 350 generations. This time depth helps to reconcile the apparent differences between anthropological and indigenous views of *Stó:lō* origins. Whether of transformational, sky-born or migratory origin, the uncontested roots of Aboriginal occupation of *S'ólh Téméxw* clearly lie beyond the limits of memory, and reside in *sxwōxwiyám*, in time immemorial.⁶⁹²

Stó:lō have a connection to all of *S'ólh Téméxw*, including the Fraser Canyon, which is evidenced through their oral history as autochthonous: a sense of roots in the earth as sacred. (see

Figure 6.1) The following *sxwōxwiyám* illustrates this connection:

When *Xa:ls* came along he saw how people were catching salmon. And how people were catching salmon was the men took the young boys and held them by the ankles over water and the young boys caught the salmon and were hauled up. *Xa:als* came along and each time he put a scratch in the rock. Each scratch represented a teaching to the people. He taught them how to make a dip net, how to make the hoop. The next scratch mark taught them how to process the nettle to make the string and how to tie it together to make the net. And the next scratch taught them how to make the platform and the next scratch taught them how to cut it so they could hang it to dry and how to make the dry rack. So all those scratches are supposed to represent a teaching – how to catch and preserve the salmon.⁶⁹³

Given this history, to begin to understand the Canyon fishery, its history and why it is both contested and a place of significant meaning, knowledge of the place itself is required.

⁶⁹¹ Dave M Schaepe, “Origins: The First Peopling of *S'ólh Téméxw*” *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 20

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Unnamed Stó:lō informant teaching in Caroline. F. Butler, “A Stó:lō Harvest: Wind Drying Salmon in the Fraser Canyon – Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Practices, Relevant Concerns,” Report for the UBC Ethnographic Field School (1997) (report does not include page numbers).

Drawing inspiration from historian Kerry Abel's discussion of "mental mapping"⁶⁹⁴, the manner in which Stó:lō people understand the Fraser Canyon is best understood in terms of the culturally defined hereditary fishing spots and this cultural definition specifically includes the names of the families associated with their use, care and management. While various topographic maps of the Fraser Canyon are available, the 1905⁶⁹⁵ (see **Appendix F**) and corresponding 1970-2007 map (see **Appendix G**)⁶⁹⁶ are most relevant, as they illustrate the Stó:lō hereditary connection to Canyon fishing sites. Stó:lō hereditary dry racks and fishing spots are located near Spuzzum⁶⁹⁷, with the Five Mile Fishery stretch of the Canyon in between them often referred to as the geo-cultural border between the *Nlaka'pamux* and Stó:lō. Archie observes that "all the people from down here used to go up there, to both sides of the river. The Seymour's, people from Laidlaw, right up to Five Mile Creek, our 'dividing line' [with the Thompson/*Nlaka'pamux*]." ⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁴ Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006)

⁶⁹⁵ See an updated version of the 1905 Map of hereditary fishcamps as recorded by Indian Superintendent Vowell. Entitled "*Stó:lō Canyon Fishery*", the spot that Archie and family now occupy is listed as "Michelle" Maria Island (Seabird Island). Carlson, "History Wars", 59.

⁶⁹⁶ The SRRMC Map, "*Terrestrial Fishing Sites of Stó:lō Fishers in Upper Fraser River Valley and Fraser Canyon 1970-2007*," (Chilliwack, B.C.: Stolo Nation SRRMC Department, April 27, 2010). Archie listed as caretaker of sites #57 and #58.

⁶⁹⁷ In *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories 1808-1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), ethnohistorian Andrea Laforet states "Spuzzum" refers to the geographic place that is "located about fifty miles from the Fraser-Thompson junction, near the border of *Nlaka'pamux* and Tait countries, and about 120 miles from the Coast." (Laforet, *Spuzzum*, 4) Spuzzum is also used interchangeably to refer to the Spuzzum First Nation, which is one of eight *Nlaka'pamux* First Nations government band members. The Spuzzum First Nation band office is located in Yale, B.C. It is a member of the Fraser Canyon Indian Administration, one of three tribal councils of the *Nlaka'pamux* people. Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/firstnation/nlakapamux_nation/default.html (download date October 12, 2010).

⁶⁹⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 1 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

Archie's fishcamp is one of the camps in the stretch of Canyon that Stó:lō fishermen use. Archie's fishing spot is at an intersection of traditional Stó:lō settlement and contemporary *Indian Act* reserve land: referred to as "Four and a Half Mile", the old traditional Stó:lō village of *Lexwts'ókwe:m* ("always skunk cabbages") is located by Yale IR#2. Archie is one of a number of people in the region who share Stó:lō and *Nlaka'pamux* ancestry, which he carried through his adoptive mother Mary Charles, who was *Nlaka'pamux*, and adoptive father Dave Charles who was Stó:lō.

Stó:lō Relationships with the Land Carved in Stone: Rock Wall Fortifications

As noted by archeologist Dr. Dave Schaepe in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, "Stó:lō oral histories, together with archeological, historical and ethnohistorical data, reveal the details of a late-pre-contact defensive system in the lower Fraser Canyon. 'Rock wall fortifications' formed the basis of this system."⁶⁹⁹ Schaepe further describes "Apparently unique within the Northwest Coast region, these features were constructed of stacked rock slabs or boulders, some in excess of a quarter ton. Five such fortifications have now been documented in the lower Canyon..."⁷⁰⁰ One of the five fortifications is located on the spot of Archie's fishcamp, near the traditional village site of *Lexwts'okwá:m*:

The five documented fortifications share similar site features. All are located 1) in narrow, turbulent places in the Canyon that act as natural barriers to upriver canoe travel;

⁶⁹⁹ Dave Schaepe, "Rock Wall Fortifications: Reconstructing a Fraser Canyon Defensive Network" In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 52-53, 52. For further discussion and analysis of Schaepe's work see: Keith Thor Carlson *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

2) on prominent look-out points or high bluffs situated immediately above the river and affording line of sight communication with surrounding settlements and neighbouring fortification sites; and 3) near settlements occupied at the time of contact...”⁷⁰¹

Further evidence of this defensive network was that “groundstone ‘*th’elquos*’ (slingshot stones) were found behind the rock wall at *Lexwts’okwá:m*”⁷⁰², as were other artifacts of war, including “chipped arrowheads and a filed iron dagger from the contact period.”⁷⁰³ As noted by Schaepe: “The Old People recall the use of rock walls in the lower Canyon. The walls, more extensive long ago, were used to guard against Coastal raiders (primarily the Southern *Kwakwaka’wakw* warriors) who manoeuvred their ocean-going canoes up the Fraser River to plunder Canyon wind dried salmon and take slaves.”⁷⁰⁴ He concludes that “(t)he distant view from *Lexwts’okwá:m*, along with defensive systems such as rock walls, offered excellent protection for the *Stó:lō*.”⁷⁰⁵

Archie’s *sqwélqwel* of the place where he fished further demonstrates its use as part of a *Stó:lō* Canyon defensive network. He described *Stó:lō* response to raiders from Vancouver Island, who would travel to raid *Stó:lō* camps for “anything they could get their hands on.”⁷⁰⁶ He recounted to me stories told to him by Paul Yowala, whose ancestral name *Nwéwtm* he carried: “Old Yowala, he was around 100 when he passed on, and he said when he was a young fella, wherever there was a bluff they’d pile lots of rocks and when they’d see a boat coming, they’d

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Schaepe, “Rock Wall Fortifications” 53.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Schaepe, “Rock Wall Fortifications”, 52..

⁷⁰⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

pour them down on them.”⁷⁰⁷ Then with a laugh, he remarked “Tell them to swim home!!!”⁷⁰⁸

Archie recalled to me other stories of raiders in the Fraser Canyon told to him by Paul Yowala:

Up close to where fishing ground is, his [Yowala’s] dad sent him out as a ‘watchman’ to prepare - if they see someone come paddling up the river, they know what to do. They’d holler and scream and when they come into shore throw the rocks to ‘sound the alarm.’ That’s what they did... Yeah, when they’d raid the fishing grounds, that’s what they would do. They would catch a lady out there and take her as a slave.⁷⁰⁹

He further described the raiding parties:

Yeah, they had a retaining wall right from the creek to the bluff... Because the raiding parties used to come, the story I got, from Vancouver Island. ..I guess [the raiding parties came from] around the edge of Vancouver Island – Nanaimo. We asked them why, why can’t you dry salmon? The salt air is heavy, so it don’t dry, so they have to go steal the dry ones!”⁷¹⁰

Archie spoke on numerous occasions of the large stone located at his family fishcamp, which contains fifteen small holes cut into it. He referred to it as a “cemetery sign”, indicating that there were fifteen circles, which he associated with the number of ancestors buried.⁷¹¹ He believed the carvings served as a map indicating the location and number of ancestors buried nearby.

Prolonged Stó:lō Occupation and Use of Fishcamps: “A Home Away From Home.”

To better understand the actual physical place requires “ground truthing”, the process of experiencing a place in a tangible way. This term has its origins in archeological and geographical discourse, and describes the shift from mapping to physically existing and

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, November 13, 2007.

⁷¹⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷¹¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, January 25, 2010.

interacting within the environment. It can be extended to include a philosophical and epistemological justification for fieldwork. With the understanding that readers will probably not visit this place, I can only here describe what is not visible on current maps. While the fishing maps provide geographic coordinates for the places in which Stó:lō people fish, no map can fully capture the central quality of this place, that quality which makes it a “home.” Archie describes how in his family, the seasonal occupation of his family fishing site served as a “home away from home”: “Yeah old Michelle and them, Chief Harry Joseph [of Seabird Island] would put in a small garden in there around this time of year”⁷¹², further adding:

Oh, it was way back. Nobody had cars or anything at that time, you had to grow your stuff. Bring a big sack of potatoes or whatever. They planted potatoes, peas, lettuce, you name it. They had rows. Fruit trees and everything. They started the same blackberries that are up there this year, they got bigger and bigger and took over the highway. The garden was right by the creek.⁷¹³

Archie’s *sqwélqwel* demonstrates Stó:lō occupation of the site through reference to seasonal gardens that were planted by his ancestors in the camp area. He recalls “my grandmothers on both sides of my family. They used to [plant gardens], I think the trees are still there, the cherry trees, green gage plums, pears. ‘A home away from home’ you know?”⁷¹⁴

However, the long term experience of Stó:lō families building a “home away from home” is at the heart of debate in treaty over the nature of occupation, use, access and control of the Canyon fishery. To more completely understand the complex nature of the relationship Stó:lō fishermen have had over time with the Canyon, it is essential to explore the colonial history and early relations between Stó:lō and *Xwelítem* which are at the root of the conflict over this region.

⁷¹² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

The Unique Connection Between the Five Mile Fishery and the Seabird Island Band

While Stó:lō oral history and *sqwélqwel* demonstrate that the practice of fishing and, specifically, wind drying salmon has been an integral component of their sustenance, both physically and spiritually, since time immemorial, *The Fort Langley Journals*⁷¹⁵ provide early written records about both the centrality of wind-dried salmon to Stó:lō peoples and details about their relations with the newly arrived *Xwelítem*. “Fort Langley was established by the Hudson Bay Company in 1827 as an inland trading post. This was the first permanent non-Native settlement in Stó:lō territory.”⁷¹⁶ The ongoing presence of *Xwelítem* and the burgeoning colonial enterprise in the Fraser Canyon was concretely established with the establishment of the reserves. On August 12, 1879, in a statement that would have significance in all subsequent discussions of Aboriginal Rights and Title, and therefore for contemporary treaty negotiations, the Commissioners established Indian fishing rights in the Canyon. G.M. Sproat’s 1879 “Minutes of Decision” illustrate his intentions to set aside collective fishing reserves. “The decision is what contemporary lower Fraser Aboriginal fishers refer to as the creation of the

⁷¹⁵ The published journals make a significant contribution to historical understanding of early settlements in B.C. as well as Native-Newcomer relations. The journals also establish the record of early attempts by newcomers to regulate Aboriginal Rights and Title in the Province. See Morag McLachlan and Wayne Suttles, *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-1830* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). For further historical analysis of the impact of the creation of reserves on the economies of Indigenous peoples, see Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849–1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), and Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), a work that provides an important summary of the administration of government policies in British Columbia from the late 19th century to the 1980s, and argues that the native fishery was invented to separate Native and non-Native economies.

⁷¹⁶ Caroline Butler, “Regulating Tradition: Stó:lō Wind Drying and Aboriginal Rights” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Department of Anthropology, UBC, 1998.), 9.

‘Five Mile Fishery.’”⁷¹⁷ As argued by historical geographer Cole Harris in his 2003 work, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*, within the historical context, Sproat was relatively sympathetic to First Nations peoples, which was reflected in his intent to fairly establish Indian policies.⁷¹⁸

When Sproat set aside Fishery Reserves in the Five Mile Creek area to ensure protection of “[t]he right of these and other Indians who have resorted to the Yale fisheries from time immemorial to have access to, and to encamp upon the banks of the Fraser River for the purpose of carrying on their salmon fisheries in their old way,”⁷¹⁹ he also set aside Reserve lands at Seabird Island with the intent of providing adequate farming land to the people living throughout the Canyon region. Sproat states “the real arable land in the neighbourhood is at Seabird Island between Skawtits and Popkum.”⁷²⁰

Currently, the Stó:lō band of Seabird Island is home to a significant portion of Fraser Canyon fishermen who access, use, control and occupy dry rack fishing sites in the Five Mile Fishery. This area, now set aside for the exclusive use of members of the Yale First Nation, is highly contested, as Stó:lō Nation have accessed, used and seasonally occupied dry rack fishing sites since time immemorial. Stó:lō Canyon fishermen, “dry rackers”, particularly those who currently live on the Seabird Island Reserve, have a distinct collective interest in maintaining

⁷¹⁷ Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism”, 156.

⁷¹⁸ Historical geographer Cole Harris’s *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2002), explores the genesis, implications, and continued impact of land policy administered upon the First Nations Peoples of British Columbia. Using a geographical perspective, Harris details the actions of the government officials who shaped and consequently determined B.C.’s contemporary reserve allocation.

⁷¹⁹ Sproat, “Minutes of Decision Volume 5/1”, 8.

⁷²⁰ Sproat, “Minutes of Decision Volume 18”, 277.

their ability to access this resource.⁷²¹ Travel and exchange between upriver and downriver Stó:lō communities has been extensive, both pre- and post-contact, creating a complex interplay between familial, cultural, economic, social, spiritual and political identities over time. Appreciation of this multifaceted relationship must be at the core of developing a meaningful and agreed-upon Shared Territory Agreement between the Stó:lō and Yale First Nations in the current treaty process. It also highlights the complex ways in which people identify as either “Stó:lō” or “Yale” and assert their identities in a contemporary environment. Archie’s recollections of travelling from Seabird Island upriver to the Fraser Canyon further support documentary evidence of the prolonged access, use, control and occupation that Seabird Island Band members have maintained in the Five Mile Creek fishery over time. He describes when he first began going to fishcamp as a boy:

Oh, [I was] quite young, seven or eight. Used to go up in the canoe. Put the sail on and hit all the eddies going up...yeah, that’s how most of them travelled. The only place we’d get off was “Steamboat Rock” and pull the canoe up with rope, then you’d hit the first eddy and boom, ride across to where we are.⁷²²

With an amused laugh, Archie recalled to me how the trip from Seabird Island to the Canyon, approximately 50 kilometers by car via the TransCanada Highway, would take his ancestors “all day...they knew when to start. A calm day no, you’d have to pull the whole day. If the wind was going that way, then they were gone!”⁷²³ Archie further reflected on his ancestors’ local knowledge, demonstrating how they knew to travel up country to their fishing

⁷²¹ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat makes explicit reference to this practice in his 1879 “Minutes of Decision,” which marks the origin of the political and administrative dimension of the unique relationship between the current-day Yale First Nation and Stó:lō peoples living at Seabird Island.

⁷²² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁷²³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 3 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

spots using “nature’s clock”, a flower that blooms in early July and signalled to them that the sockeye salmon were running:

First of July the sockeye comes, they’d watch for that blossom, it’s a berry blossom, and when it first goes, that shows the sockeye comes. That was their calendar. It’s some kind of a berry; you see them on the roads out there.⁷²⁴

Tina identified this flower as “mock orange”, a plant “that has just a little flower.”⁷²⁵

Fish, caught and/or wind dried in the Canyon, is shared with others by families who fish and is a food staple that ensures food and ceremonial needs are met throughout the year. Salmon offers not only sustenance but also plays an integral role in the economic (and thereby social and political), spiritual and ceremonial life of Stó:lō people. Weddings, funerals, graduations, winter dancing and virtually every other ceremonial or social gathering all have salmon as a fundamental component or mainstay of Stó:lō gatherings. In this way salmon sustains spiritual life and contemporary collective identity. As one Stó:lō Elder I interviewed reflected, salmon forms the core of all Stó:lō ceremonies in a way that has no comparison to or equivalent in Christian practices.⁷²⁶

As anthropologist Jay Miller establishes in his work *Lushootseed Texts* (1999), Coast Salish fishing grounds are also inextricably linked to specific “teachings” or what leading Salish

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

⁷²⁶ The First Salmon Ceremony epitomizes the centrality of salmon to Stó:lō history and identity: “In March, the Stó:lō families celebrated the first spring salmon caught with the First Salmon ceremonies, called *Thehitem* (“looking after the fish”).” Colin Duffield and Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, “Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds” In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 62-63, 62.

scholar Wayne Suttles refers to as “advice.”⁷²⁷ As a result, fundamental elements of Stó:lō ethos and identity are distinctly and uniquely bound to the Canyon fishing grounds, which provide a geographic place to interact with these teachings. These teachings, integral to Stó:lō thought, cannot be fully engaged away from the Canyon itself – in this way, the Canyon is not only a place for teachings to be transmitted from generation to generation, it embodies the teachings, and as such, is the source of knowledge - the teacher.

Cultural “Dislocation” Resulting from Aboriginal Policy - 1880s-1951

Ongoing colonial policy and practice during this time, reflected by the collective goal of *Xwelítem* to achieve their colonial agenda, continued with the regulation of fishing on the river. This commenced the processes of marginalization and regulation of Stó:lō fishing that continues today. As noted by Carlson and Eustace, “(b)etween 1878 and 1895, the federal fisheries department introduced legislation limiting fishing techniques and creating the distinct and artificial Aboriginal ‘food fishery’. In addition, fishing schedules were created and coordinated with the ocean-based industrial fleet, resulting in closures of the Stó:lō Canyon fishery except on prescribed days.”⁷²⁸ Further politics of exclusion by newcomers came in the form of

... two separate regulatory initiatives, the first aimed at nurturing non-Native commercial development and the second aimed at undermining Indigenous cultural traditions. The Salmon Fishery Regulations for the Province of British Columbia, 1868, identified salmon resources as a commodity that needed to be regulated in the interest of the growing non-Native immigrant population, while the 1884 ‘anti-potlatch’ amendment to the *Indian Act* designated the large property-transfer gatherings a crime.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁷ Miller, *An Anchored Radianance*, 10.

⁷²⁸ Carlson and Eustace, “True Spirit”, 20.

⁷²⁹ Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism”, 150.

This policy was significant for Stó:lō peoples, as Carlson explains:

The banning of the potlatch made it illegal to publically transfer hereditary names and their associated property-ownership rights between generations. Small scale informal transfers continued, but the absence of public ceremonies where such decisions could be effectively communicated to people throughout the territory caused competing claims of ownership to pit individuals and families against one another without formal mechanisms for resolution.⁷³⁰

Over the course of the 20th century, access, use, control and protection of the Fraser Canyon Fishery and wind-drying sites were severely impacted by a number of factors. As a result of the gold rush in the 1880s the encroachments of the *Xwelítem* in the Fraser Canyon “affected wind drying in terms of both the environmental impact of the gold rush ‘traffic’ and issues of access.”⁷³¹ Following the gold rush, “The construction of the CP railroad in 1882 along the banks of the Fraser River ruined many family dry rack sites.”⁷³² As Stó:lō and *Xwelítem* economies, social norms, customs, spiritual beliefs and values became intertwined with the sustained impact of colonial policy on Stó:lō people, Stó:lō increasingly had to fight to stay connected to the Fraser Canyon and its associated fishing practices. Stó:lō participation in the wage-labour economy, including the local hop yards, logging, agriculture and the canneries⁷³³ altered the availability and thus ability of young Stó:lō to travel and spend their summer season in the Canyon. As historian Arthur Ray notes: “Of all the traditional fisheries in the province,

⁷³⁰ Carlson, “History Wars”, 59.

⁷³¹ Butler, “A Stó:lō Harvest” (page unlisted).

⁷³² Ibid.

⁷³³ As scholar Jody Woods notes, “The vast majority of workers in the canneries were women. They processed the salmon that the men caught, continuing older practices of gender prescribed work.” “The Salmon Canneries: Making Room for Families” In *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 72-73, 72.

those of the Fraser River groups suffered the greatest damage from the salmon-canning industry and other economic development.”⁷³⁴

By the 1950s, technology had further developed so that most Stó:lō homes had refrigeration, hence freezing became a method of preservation that could replace wind drying. Though it entailed a significant cost to the families, canning became a norm during the first half of the century, “for it was a much quicker method of preserving salmon”.⁷³⁵ However, as noted by Harry Hawthorn et al., for the Stó:lō, “Fish, especially salmon, provides the largest component of today’s food not bought from a store.”⁷³⁶ But perhaps the greatest catalyst for the “dislocation” or disruption of Stó:lō in all aspects of life, including their use of the Fraser Canyon Fishery, was derived from the multi-generational impact of the Indian Residential schools system. Keith Basso observes that the centrality of place to personal and collective identity becomes even more apparent when we are dislocated from, or deprived of, our experience of a place of meaning to us: “It is then that we come to see that attachments to places may be nothing less than profound, and that when these attachments are threatened we may feel threatened as well. Places, we realize, are as much a part of us as we are of them...”⁷³⁷ The residential school system disrupted the historical “flow” of Stó:lō people from their fishing camps and generations of children were deprived of the fishcamp experience. It is only recently that people have been able to fully reassert the primacy and importance of participating fully in

⁷³⁴ Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native Peoples* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1996), 308.

⁷³⁵ Butler, “A Stó:lō Harvest,” (page unlisted)

⁷³⁶ Harry B. Hawthorn et al., *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 84.

⁷³⁷ Basso, *Wisdom Sits*, xiii-xiv.

this cultural heritage. Stó:lō oral history speaks to the importance of wind drying not only for sustenance, but for the ongoing maintenance of Stó:lō identity:“(w)ind drying seems to be building up. A lot of the young people want to take over. This younger generation are more involved than I was or my children. We were residential schoolers.”⁷³⁸

Conflict and Resolution: The Sustained Impact of Colonial Policy on Stó:lō Life

When scholar Keith Basso asks “What do people make of places?” he observes:

This question is as old as people and places themselves. As old, perhaps, as the idea of home, of ‘our territory’ as opposed to ‘their territory’, of entire regions and local landscapes where groups of men and women have invested themselves (their thoughts, their values, their collective sensitivities) and to which they feel they belong.⁷³⁹

The historical effects and impacts of colonial policy on such connectedness to place have been playing out in the lives of Stó:lō families and fishermen for over 100 years, leading to a number of types of conflict. Currently the access to, occupation, use and control of Stó:lō family-based hereditary fishcamps in the Fraser Canyon is contested in various ways.

First, there are intra-community conflicts, which are expressed in negotiations between the greater Stó:lō community and the Yale First Nation⁷⁴⁰; specifically the overlapping Treaty claim between the members of the Stó:lō *Xwexwilmexw* Treaty Association (SXTA) and Yale First Nation,⁷⁴¹ but also those Stó:lō bands not currently sitting at the treaty table (including

⁷³⁸ Unidentified Stó:lō speaker in Butler, “A Stó:lō Harvest”, (page unlisted).

⁷³⁹ Basso *Wisdom Sits*, xiii.

⁷⁴⁰ As stated on the Yale First Nation website, The Yale First Nation claim distinct cultural status from their Stó:lō and *Nlaka’pamux* neighbours: “We are an independent First Nation, standing apart from both Stó:lō Nation, and the *Nlaka’pamux*.” (<http://www.yalefirstnation.ca/> download date October 12, 2010).

⁷⁴¹ Amanda Fehr’s analysis of Oliver Wells 1962 interview with Stó:lō Elder Bob Joe serves to historicize culturally distinct ideas of how access, use and control of Canyon fishery have been defined by members of the Yale First

Seabird Island) who seek to maintain access to, use and control of the Canyon area in which the contested fishing and wind drying spots are located.

Second, tension between Stó:lō and *Xwelítem* takes shape in multiple ways, including the ongoing conflict over the policies, methods and techniques the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) currently use and historically used to regulate the Aboriginal fishery in the Canyon. A related consideration involves how non-Aboriginal commercial and sports fishermen on some parts of the Fraser River have exceeded the collective catch of Stó:lō fishermen for Food and Ceremonial fish (F and C), despite the Supreme Court case *R vs. Sparrow*⁷⁴², which clarified the inherent right of Aboriginal people to fishing and hunting to ensure that the food and ceremonial needs of their communities were met. While in *R vs Sparrow*, the *sui generis*⁷⁴³

Nation. Fehr states that “According to tribal historian Bob Joe, who in 1962 shared his memories of the creation of the I:yem Memorial with amateur ethnographer Oliver Wells, the memorial asserted the right of all of the Stó:lō people to fish in the five mile fishery above Yale. In contrast, he noted the different relationship that the *Nlaka'pamux* had with the area, as they needed to get permission before fishing there.” (“Bob Joe at Tzeachten February 8, 1962,” in Oliver Wells Interview Collection (1961–1968), transcript, SNA, 103 in Fehr, “Relationships: A Study of Memory, Change, and Identity,” 29). Fehr continues: “This explanation offers a possible reason as to why the current Chief and Council of the Yale Band, individuals with *Nlaka'pamux* heritage, believe that other groups, such as the Stó:lō, need permission to fish in the Canyon. This is reflective of how their ancestors and families understood outsiders to relate to the fishery.” (Fehr, “Relationships: A Study of Memory, Change and Identity”, 29).

⁷⁴² One of the outcomes of *R vs Sparrow* was that, with fishing rights in particular, in times of conservation when the fish are running low in numbers, non-Aboriginal fishermen must bear the burden of conservation to ensure that Aboriginal right to food and ceremonial fishing needs can still be met. However, this is a battle being waged on the river, far from the halls of justice. There have been considerable conflict among three groups (*Xwelítem*, Stó:lō and other First Nations), with Stó:lō having to forfeit fish that were theirs by inherent right.

⁷⁴³ Justice Dickson notes the *sui generis* right as “best characterized by its inalienability [other than by surrender to the Crown], coupled with the fact that the Crown is under an obligation to deal with the land on the Indian’s behalf

nature of Aboriginal rights was established by the courts; there continues to be a struggle on the river.

Finally, conflict also expresses itself within the Stó:lō community in the form of intercommunity disputes over ownership and control of resources. Considering the hereditary, family-based caretaking system by which access to and use of Fraser Canyon resources is ascribed, the weight given to Stó:lō family authorities to maintain and oversee the Canyon fishery has been challenged and eroded in a number of ways in the past century. There has been a disruption of traditional systems of governance and culturally sanctioned conflict resolution strategies due to colonial policies and practices, including the physical dislocation of peoples from the Canyon to attend the Residential schools and the need/interest of Stó:lō people to participate in the wage labour economy. One impact of such spiritual, economic, social and literal physical dislocation is what Carlson describes as “history wars.” This term describes the ways in which Stó:lō “people justify either their ownership of a fishing site or their preferential-access privileges in terms of their claim being more traditional (and therefore more legitimate) than someone else’s.”⁷⁴⁴

Sadly, while assertions of Aboriginal Rights and Title to resources play out in courts, family relationships suffer and hereditary systems of management and authority are further eroded. As a result, better understanding the ways in which these social (and thus familial), political and cultural dimensions affect management of Canyon resources can be of benefit to Stó:lō, non-Stó:lō people and institutions alike. Understanding and emulating Archie’s successful

when the interest is surrendered.” (*Guerin v The Queen*, quoted in Michael Asch, *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equity, and Respect for Difference* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 143.

⁷⁴⁴ Carlson, “History Wars”, 58.

embodiment of the role as *Sia:teleq* helps to clarify the hereditary system of cultural resource management that has existed over time and demonstrates the efficacy of authority enacted by those chosen by their community to maintain specific cultural resources (both natural and spiritual).

Serving to illuminate the prolonged access, use, occupation and control of Canyon fishing sites by Stó:lō people, as well as the contested nature of such understandings, is (or rather ‘was’) the *I:yem* memorial.⁷⁴⁵ One of the six ancient Stó:lō settlements and cemeteries in the Canyon, *I:yem*, was until very recently commemorated with a memorial plaque at the pre-contact village site that continues to serve as a cemetery, fishing grounds and site of Stó:lō cultural practice. *I:yem* translates from *Halq’eméylem* to “strong or lucky place”⁷⁴⁶ and is also known as IR#2 or “Bell Crossing”. The plaque was erected in 1938 by Stó:lō men Dennis Peters and Isaac James. It states:

1938 A.D. Erected by the Stallo Indians in memory of the many hundreds of our forefathers buried here. This is one of six ancient cemeteries within our five mile native fishing grounds which we inherited from our ancestors. R.I.P.

The *I:yem* memorial is significant for numerous reasons, as highlighted by the research of Keith Carlson and, more recently, Mandy Fehr. Carlson states that while the *I:yem* Memorial was principally created to honour the memory of the deceased “whose remains had been re-interred after developments associated with the building of Canada’s two transcontinental

⁷⁴⁵ As Fehr notes: older spellings of “Eayem” and “Stalo” are as used on the memorial (Fehr, “Relationships: A Study of Memory, Change, and Identity”, 9). I follow Fehr in using the form of these terms standardized in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*” Iyem is the current use of term.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

railways”⁷⁴⁷; it also represented “a bold assertion of shared Stó:lō collective identity and a broad communal title to the Canyon fishery.”⁷⁴⁸ Additionally, the memorial “signified a recognition that the principal threat to Aboriginal fishing rights now came from non-native interest, and implicitly that internal disputes should be handled internally.”⁷⁴⁹ Most notable, stresses Fehr, is that the words on the memorial “represent the first time that the term Stó:lō was publicly used in print by the Aboriginal people of the Fraser River Valley and Canyon to describe themselves.”⁷⁵⁰ Sadly, “In October 2008, some members of the Yale First Nation used a backhoe to push the *I:yem* Memorial into the Fraser Canyon. A group of Stó:lō people have placed a new stone plaque (with the same inscription as the 1938 original) into the ground where the memorial once stood.”⁷⁵¹ More recently, that replacement plaque has been destroyed as well. It is clear that the memorial has also become a symbol of the contested and conflicted nature of the Canyon fishery, highlighting intra-community disputes over the rightful use and occupation of the region for fishing.

Transfer of Hereditary Caretaking for Fishcamp: Archie’s Family as Case Study

Archie’s family experience at fishcamp illustrates the flexible yet structured process by which Stó:lō hereditary fishing spots are transferred. When I asked Archie how long his family

⁷⁴⁷ Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism”, 168.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid, 168.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid, 168.

⁷⁵⁰ Fehr, “Relationships: A Study of Memory, Change, and Identity”, 9.

⁷⁵¹ Fehr, “A Study of Memory, Change, and Identity”, 31. For further discussion see also: “The Relationships of Place: A Study of Change and Continuity in Stó:lō Understandings of *I:yem*” Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2008.

had been fishing in the Fraser Canyon he responded “oh it goes way back. Many, many years...”⁷⁵² Archie described how he inherited use of the two side by side spots⁷⁵³ that his family currently fishes: “it was given to Dave Charles by Charlie Douglas, oh many years back...”⁷⁵⁴

He further described the transfer of the site in a 1998 interview with Keith Carlson “Yeah, well, it was given to my dad [Dave Charles] first. Handed down to me and now my grandchildren’s got it.”⁷⁵⁵ *Nwéwtu* shared his knowledge of the transfer of the sites to Archie:

As far I know David and Mary were already fishing at our current spot. Papa and Tina were fishing with Bill and Marge Andrew further up river. Papa asked Tina if she knew how to wind dry and she replied "yes I do." Papa commented "well what the hell we doing here then." And moved into our current spot with David and Mary. That's how it was explained to me for Papa and Tina.⁷⁵⁶

Archie never stated explicitly to me or to the members of his family whom I interviewed why he believed he was chosen to inherit caretaking responsibilities for the fishcamp from his father, yet there are a number of mutually supporting factors that seem to have influenced this decision. First, family members suggest it may be in part due to him carrying the Charles name. Second, he “stuck close by” his adoptive parents, living next door to Dave and Mary Charles on Seabird Island. Mary Charles continued to live next door to Archie after Dave’s passing. As Archie stated on many occasions, and as his family members have re-iterated, he was especially close to both his adoptive parents. Third, Archie nurtured his own lifelong interest and

⁷⁵² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, August 9, 2009.

⁷⁵³ *Nwéwtu* shared the following description of the physical location of the fishing spots: “One is directly underneath our dry rack and the other is to the right of the dry rack. The one underneath never gets used at all.” He adds “we have used it, just not for quite some time. If you don't know how to fish there your net always gets snagged.” Zack Joe, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, March 27, 2015.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ Archie Charles, interview with Keith Carlson, August 28, 1998.

⁷⁵⁶ Zack Joe, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, March 27, 2015.

experience in fishing, but as his leadership abilities developed, he also carried on the legacy of his parents in other areas of life: Mary Charles's vision for community-based education, Dave Charles' style of political leadership and the responsibilities of his hereditary name "*T'exeyelh*" (Chief) that Dave passed on. The combination of these factors likely contributed to the choice to pass on the fishing site to Archie. While Archie states he began fishing there [significantly] in 1946,⁷⁵⁷ in a 1997 interview Archie responded to the question: "Have you fished up at Yale every year?" with "I missed the war years, but yeah pretty well every year."⁷⁵⁸ He stated that his "parents fished there too", (see **Figure 6.2**) adding: "I've been fishing there since I put the camp [current dry rack structure] there in 1970..."⁷⁵⁹ (see **Figure 6.3**) There were, of course, a number of disruptions in his time spent at fishcamp, including his years spent at residential school, of which he stated "Oh, many years back I knew when they moved up there, 'cause I had to go to Kamloops [IRS] first of August. I was home July...."⁷⁶⁰ His next period of time away from fishing was when he left for the war overseas in 1945. While he started spending extensive time fishing post-1945, he was also working in logging camps and so spent comparatively little time there fishing in the 1950s.

The Douglas family camp is directly south of the site where Archie Charles fishes. In 2010, I conducted an interview with Elder Sid Douglas (*Sru Ets La Nough*),⁷⁶¹ who spent time fishing at this site as a child and whose family members still fish there. While *Sru Ets La Nough*

⁷⁵⁷ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Keith Thor Carlson, August 28, 1998.

⁷⁶⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 3 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁶¹ The Douglas family camp is directly south of Archie's two camps, and is listed as #56 on the SRRMC Map (Appendix G).

and I have known each other for many years, his introduction in our interview about fishing serves to illustrate his familial connections to the Charles family:

My name is *Sru-Ets-Lan-Ough* and people know me as Sidney Douglas, otherwise. I have lived in Cheam all my life. My parents were Albert and Edna Douglas. My father come from Cheam, my mother come from Matsqui, she was originally from the Julian family and she was raised by Mary and Dave Charles. So, we do have a history around fishing grounds. My dad always said that Louis Squattitch was his grandfather and when they got married he said his grandfather gave him one of the fishing grounds up in Yale. We still fish up there, some of our family members do. I haven't been up there for a few years, but some of my siblings still go up.⁷⁶²

Archie explained that the transfer of fishing spots is passed down by families, through hereditary lineage. Of his experience, he reflects: "I had a brother following me [to inherit camp], (Moody Michelle from Chehalis) but he passed away, so (daughter) Rose fishes up there, right below the rack on that side. So if anything happens to me, Kelsey (Rose's son), Lewie (Tina's son) carry on. It's been like that for years..."⁷⁶³ Archie described to whom he has passed down caretaking responsibility: "Rosie (daughter) and Kelsey "*Texeyelh*" (her son), but the whole crew will still be there."⁷⁶⁴ He further remarked on the contested nature of fishing spots affected by Federal policy:

That's the way it is, right from the beginning, I guess. The Lorenzetto's [camp] was right up on top of big rock, he had a big rack, right at the Bells Crossing. They used to tie up the highway there [because] that was the only road you had to go across. He had a little log cabin up there...Below, where that Crossing goes. That big rock? That's where he was - around there. That's why I was saying 'how come this guy is trying to control the river, and the old Chief, Emory, had to walk all the way from Yale to the Bell [Crossing] and he was fishing with that? Well, they were all from Laidlaw, even the Emory's. That's why I say it's the Indian Affairs fault that this happened."⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶² Sid Douglas, interview with Meagan Gough, May 10, 2011, TRM.

⁷⁶³ Archie Charles, interview Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

On one occasion I asked Archie what he would like see happen to the fishcamps. His response illuminates his belief in the principle of caretaking – understood as access and use based on reciprocity – rather than on Western notions of ownership or private property. His comments also reveal the disruption of the hereditary system via regulation of access to and use/occupation of fishing grounds as set forth in Yale First Nations’ treaty. He remarked:

AC: Well, they should be left to the people that are working there. Like my camp, [step son] Lewie works down here, [daughter] Rosie works, and they have to go way up after work and do their share, we let them have the nets anyways, but they only have an hour or so to do it in. Like that Bob [Hope] [Former Chief of Yale First Nation], his father didn't have a fishing ground.

MG: Who's his father?

AC: Lawrence Hope. He passed away a few years back. That's where that hereditary thing [system] should come in, it should, it did go to the son, Francis. I don't know who after that, but a drinking party come on and the hereditary thing went haywire. It's good for some places, but it's no good here.⁷⁶⁶

Sid Douglas (*Sru Ets La Nough*) further remarked of the caretaking system in place at Canyon fishing sites: “Yeah, well right now it's a common site for our family, so when one family member goes up they can fish for a while and then when another one shows up then they'll fish for a while...”⁷⁶⁷ Douglas's comments, along with Archie's, about the notion of caretaking being something closer to stewardship than ownership is supported by geographer Karen Albers' interviews with Stó:lō people. She notes:

It turned out during the interviews that many interviewees did not like the word 'ownership' to describe the regulation of resource sites. Ownership was, in general, defined and accepted by the interviewees as 'allowed or had the right to use a certain resource-site, which was acknowledged and respected by other people'. This means that

⁷⁶⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁶⁷ Sid Douglas, interview with Meagan Gough, April 16, 2010, SRRMC (Protected).

though one person or family was the acknowledged 'user' or 'owner' of a site, other people asked for permission before they used this site.⁷⁶⁸

Addressing distinctions between caretaking authority and ownership is crucial to an understanding of the hereditary system of resource management and resolution of conflict that arises.

What does caretaking “authority” mean in Stó:lō and Euro-Canadian contexts? Does it also involve ownership? How close is this to a non-Stó:lō idea of property ownership? In Albers’ research with Stó:lō individuals about family-owned sites, she found the term “ownership” to mean “allowed or had the right to use a certain resource site, which was acknowledged and respected by other people.”⁷⁶⁹ Given the centrality of this concept to understanding the contemporary dialogue used to establish Stó:lō Rights and Title to the Canyon Fishery, an important question is “What is the difference between ownership and caretaking?” In my interview with Herb Joe (*T’xwelatse*), he provided clear insight into this concept: “We don’t own the world, we are a part of the world; we are a part of the world we live in.”⁷⁷⁰ While caretaking involves notions of use and control whereby access is determined and restricted, it also embodies a moral and spiritual ownership that necessitates care, maintenance and protection of all the resources in an extensive system of reciprocity. Caretaking authority emphasizes taking care of land, air and related environmental resources more so than do the principles of private land tenure and possessive individualism that characterize non-Stó:lō property law. *T’xwelatse*

⁷⁶⁸ Karen Albers, “Resource Sites in S’ólh Téméxw: Traditional Concepts of Ownership” Final Report for Family Owned Sites Project, (Unpublished Research Report, 2000), 5.

⁷⁶⁹ Albers, “Resources Sites”, 5.

⁷⁷⁰ Herb Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 6, 2011, SRRMC TRM, in Gough and Schaepe, “Caretaking”, 13.

further explains why, broadly speaking, ownership does not reflect a complete understanding of Stó:lō caretaking for *S'ólh Téméxw*:

[It] goes back to a concept of land tenure, which was a completely foreign concept to us – how could we own something that's living? You know, it's like I don't own my sister or my brother, they are special human beings. So, it's the same thing with all of the land and everything that's around us. We were taught to see the world around us in that manner. So the ownership of the land and the resources that were around, no human being owned it. But that's not to say there weren't caretakers for those resources and there were specific families for instance that had that responsibility.⁷⁷¹

While Stó:lō cultural principles of resource management that form the relationship between humans and the natural world have endured, these principles have been continually challenged throughout the course of the past century. In fact, at this point, Stó:lō people are struggling, literally for their lives, to carry forward teachings that were subverted and disrupted via the Indian Residential school experience, the anti-potlatch laws, assimilationist policies and the impact of modern technologies in the face of Western influences of individualism and materialism. Stó:lō determination and insistence on the maintenance core aspects of their cultural life, including the vitally important role of fishcamps is a prime example of this struggle. And the hereditary system that exists within Stó:lō culture, which shapes how ownership of fishing spots is allocated, is a significant component of their cultural life.

Broadly speaking, the concept of “ownership” is more precisely understood as “caretaking”, with family heads acting as “caretakers” of the fishing grounds, regulating the resources associated with the family grounds that their descendants and (immediate and extended) relatives use. Stó:lō cultural advisor Sonny McHalsie favours the use of the term

⁷⁷¹ Herb Joe, interview with Meagan Gough, May 6, 2011, SRRMC TRM, in Gough and Schaepe, “Caretaking”, 14.

“occupant” in lieu of “owner”⁷⁷² to refer to resource management, specifically fishing grounds. As Keith Carlson points out, property transfer ownership protocols have changed over time. In the early nineteenth century, the primary method for establishing access, use and management of a fishing site was determined via “formal intergenerational transfers via potlatch naming ceremony”. In the early twentieth century, after the imposition of the ban on the potlatch, “increasingly informal intergenerational transfers of sites were held during small family gatherings”. In the late twentieth century, the hereditary system is still in place, albeit punctuated by “informal intergenerational transfers as well as acquisition of seemingly unoccupied or unused sites.”⁷⁷³

Canadian anthropologist Wilson Duff discusses the hereditary system that guides Stó:lō access to and use of fishing spots in the Fraser Canyon in what is considered by many scholars to be his most important ethnographic work, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley* (1952): “Salmon dip netting stations were owned by families.” Further that (n)ominally the station was owned by the head of the family [and] practically everybody who wanted to fish could claim the right through kinship to use at least one station.”⁷⁷⁴ It is important to note that since Duff’s writing in the 1950s, the numbers of Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō fishermen in the Fraser Canyon have dramatically increased, meaning there is more competition for sockeye salmon (a limited and highly profitable resource), thereby compounding the described stresses already placed on the hereditary system. Carlson further explicates the value of the fishing grounds:

⁷⁷² Sonny McHalsie, in Albers “Resource Sites in S’ólh Téméxw”, 5.

⁷⁷³ Carlson, “History Wars”, 58.

⁷⁷⁴ Duff, “Upper Stalo”, 77.

Among the most highly valued hereditary rights, and one that undoubtedly motivated many marriages among upper class families, were those associated with special resource sites like Canyon fishing spots. Access to such locations was secured through marriage by attaining a hereditary name.⁷⁷⁵

Fishing and preservation techniques in the Canyon, as well as accompanying sustenance and social activities, have changed over time. Techniques vary among families. Demonstrative of the interconnectedness between Stó:lō and neighbouring First Nation communities, Mary Charles stated that she learned fishing techniques and practices used by Stó:lō fishermen through her marriage to Dave Charles and Tina brought her own unique canning and preservation methods to her union with Archie (**see Appendix H**). Tina has a highly individualized style of canning, in which she places the flesh part of the fish out “because it looks pretty.” (**See Figure 6.4**) Tina taught me how to can fish in her style during my time at fishcamp. (**see Figure 6.5**)

During their lifetime, Archie and Tina saw pronounced changes to both preservation methods and fish stocks. Archie reflected that his mother and father, Mary and Dave Charles, canned, though “(t)hey don’t can as many as we do, just four or five dozen.... They didn’t dry Spring salmon then.”⁷⁷⁶ Archie also recalled that there were more salmon in his youth, stating: “Oh yeah. You sit up there in the dry rack and you see them. Wherever there’s an eddy they stop to rest a while, and take off. Now you can’t see them.”⁷⁷⁷ He attributes the decline in part to excessive fishing in the ocean. “Well, they use seiners down in Vancouver in Juan De Fuca Strait. What they catch in one seiner, the whole river loses. They say ‘no, no. no’ but [laughs]

⁷⁷⁵ Carlson and Eustace, “True Spirit”, 11.

⁷⁷⁶ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 3 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

they know it all.”⁷⁷⁸ Archie described how fishing preservation methods changed over the course of his lifetime and the jobs he was charged with as a child:

Packing water, they dry them [fish] for...they don't do it now, but they dry them for two weeks. Then take them all down, put birch leaves over top and when the leaves dry it takes the oil with them and that was my job! To trim the birch trees around. Now we just hang them [salmon to wind dry] there, come home and take them off. Of course, they [ancestors] didn't have big dry racks like we got.⁷⁷⁹

He described how it was also his job to collect “birch leaves, or any big leaves.

Thimbleberry leaves and when they started to dry they would take the oil off [the fish] because there was no freezers then. We never got that here until the 1960s, around the sixties.”⁷⁸⁰ While sockeye is the fish he typically hangs to wind dry, (see **Figure 6.6**) he says he likes Spring salmon as well, so he constructed his dry rack so that the Spring would have their own spot:

It takes so long to dry [a big Spring salmon], a whole two months, but I like Spring. So mine stays up. In order to keep it, they [ancestors] built a, there's a tree there, they built a house up there for them, as long as they don't get wet, they can hang their salmon back up again [on the rack]. When you want one, you go take the ladder and get one! [laughs]⁷⁸¹

Archie said he learned to fish not by being taught by a single person, but rather “just by watching them [Elders]. We used to tie ourselves up and hang and tie ourselves to a rock, in case you slipped or something.”⁷⁸² He would use a dip-net method as a youth, which he said was traditionally constructed of “cedar bark or stinging nettle. It is just like what do you call it, silk?” Noting that “I never tried [making netting], I was always smart...I'd go to town!”⁷⁸³ While staying

⁷⁷⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 19, 2010 (Private).

⁷⁷⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 3 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Ibid.

with Archie at fishcamp in 2007, I observed Archie heading off with a machete to chop down wood. (see **Figure 6.7**) I asked him what he was making, to which he replied he was “(m)aking a hoop, we can use them for cooking, too. Yew wood you can use. There’s another one you use for baking. I got one hanging in the cabin up there, there’s four or five in the family, you can put ten slices on and cook it.”⁷⁸⁴ He further adds of this cooking method:

Yeah, then you just turn it [salmon]. I did that too, I used to cook, when I first started BBQ’ing for the [Seabird] Festival. Make about a hundred poles, ten slices on each pole. You can cook quite a bit, enough for fifty people or higher. I cooked a bunch here a couple weeks back. What do you call? We used to work in cahoots with Lummi, all the sports grounds they have, it was nice to go over there and cook and that’s what they’d use. We used to make the sticks for them. Yeah, it’s [the specific type of wood] right above the rack, you’ll see they [ancestors] got a yellow bush, supposed to be a flower or whatever it is, a seedling. Try to get them all the same size, tapered off like a knife, eh? My old man used to say “turn that one”, and it was my job to turn them. You cook the flesh first then turn around and the skin comes off. Yeah, get them sticks or they could use the...another way is to get that same [wood] but bigger, about that big around, and three or four feet. You split it and you hew it out and you can put a whole salmon in there. And pieces of, strips of cedar to hold it, eh? [laughs] Then you can cut it the size you want...if you want a half, you got it!⁷⁸⁵

In his youth, the water used for camp activities was drawn from a nearby freshwater spring:

We used the spring. I would go way up, fifteen lengths of hose, under the tracks, under the highway. Before the highway, it used to come right to where the pipe sticks out, just right there to the pot. But you notice, wherever there’s water, spring, there was a camp there, all the way down. They won’t drink that Fraser River water.⁷⁸⁶

Currently, though water is brought from town, collecting spring water is still done as a recreational activity – one of many activities people participate in while at camp that extend beyond fishing. Additional activities include berry picking and harvesting of medicinal and

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

ceremonial materials, something members of Archie's family continue to undertake. (see **Figure 6.8**) Archie's fishcamp is used for catching salmon for food and ceremonies, not fish for commercial sale or sale on the black market. While Archie did not engage in the sale of fish from this site or permit it by visitors, he was not, at all points of his life, opposed to the idea of Stó:lō selling fish in contravention of Canadian law. Prior to the regulation of fish sales, salmon had a long history of being a key commodity among families and among neighbouring tribes.⁷⁸⁷ He shared memories with Sonny McHalsie and Keith Carlson⁷⁸⁸ about his experience as a youth where he would pack fish in a cleverly modified Imperial Oil truck to be shipped to buyers in Vancouver and elsewhere and sold on the black market. As historian Kimberly Linkous Brown observes: "The business of fishing need not be separated from the Stó:lō tradition of fishing, whether conducted illegally in the shadows of night or legally in the light of day."⁷⁸⁹

The *Sia:teleq* - Cultural Authority for Management of Stó:lō Hereditary Fishing Sites

What is a *Sia:teleq*? According to Wilson Duff's discussion of "head men" or leaders of various aspects of cultural life⁷⁹⁰, we can say that a *Sia:teleq* is a family authority who manages a

⁷⁸⁷ As observed by Caroline Butler in her 1998 MA research: "The commercial fishery is defined by *Xwelítem* rules, rights of access, and distribution patterns. Although the fishery has continuity with the past because Stó:lō have always caught and trade/sold fresh salmon, the practice is now firmly embedded in a non-Native system of management. Wind drying, on the other hand, is understood as still existing with the realm of Aboriginal control and the family camps are very much managed by the Elders." (Butler, "Regulating Tradition", 34).

⁷⁸⁸ Keith Thor Carlson, Sonny McHalsie, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, 2012.

⁷⁸⁹ Kimberly Linkous Brown, "To Fish for Themselves: A Study of Accommodation and Resistance in the Stó:lō Fishery." (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2005), 187 cited in MacDonald, Katya. "Crossing Paths: Knowing and Navigating Routes of Access to Stó:lō Fishing Sites," *UFV Research Review* Volume 2: issue 2 (2008), 36-53; 46.

⁷⁹⁰ Duff "Upper Stalo", 77-80.

hereditary fishing spot. During an interview I conducted with Sonny McHalsie in 2010, he recounted the conversation he had with the late Stó:lō Elder Rosaleen George in 1995, where he first heard the term “*Sia:teleq*”⁷⁹¹ :

So she went on to explain a *Sia:teleq* is the person who is well respected by the family and given the position to oversee all the fishing that takes place at the family owned fishing site. So that person needs to know all the extended family members, needs to know the dry rack capacity, needs to know the different fishing rocks that are available at certain levels of water, at high water and then when the water starts dropping, so basically all of that information. Then they are the person who coordinates all of that and makes sure they treat everyone fairly, that everyone gets a fair share, everyone gets their time to fish on the rocks when it’s available, they get their sticks and a place on the dry rack to dry their salmon, so that’s the *Sia:teleq*’s responsibility. So if you look at some of the large families, if you look at the fishermen – like a good example is Grand Chief Archie Charles... I mean he’s probably not going to say that he owns that site, because he knows his family site – his family owns it. But I think that’s the role that he plays there, he’s the *Sia:teleq* and I’ll bet he’s training somebody else to be the *Sia:teleq* as well. Because that’s a big responsibility knowing who your extended family is and then making sure you have a place in a dry rack for them and a time to come up and fish and not only the dry rack but also the canning, too, because sometimes the salmon that’s caught is canned, all of those things. So that’s a *Sia:teleq* she says, that’s where I found that out.⁷⁹²

In addition to this description of the *Sia:teleq*, a list of cultural practices associated with managing and regulating hereditary fishcamps was provided by Elders participating in the Stó:lō *Shxwelí Halq’eméylem* language revival program. The Elders described both the “fishcamp co-coordinators’ ‘duties’ and ‘fishcamp’ rules.” From the list emerge six broad categories of “duties.” These duties correspond extremely well with accepted ethnographic descriptions of the respected attributes and abilities of a *Siyá:m* or *Sia:teleq*, and include:

⁷⁹¹ Stó:lō cultural advisor Sonny McHalsie (*Naxaxalhts’i*) also describes the role of *Sia:teleq* in his contribution to the collection of essays about Salish culture, *Be of Good Mind*, (2009), a follow-up to scholar Wayne Suttles’ seminal work, *Coast Salish Essays* (1987).

⁷⁹² Sonny McHalsie, interview with Meagan Gough, April 26, 2010, SRRMC (Protected).

1) General monitoring of people's behaviour, noting who contributes and who does not; 2) Co-ordination and organization of people's labour; 3) Determining distribution of salmon caught based upon individual's distinct status and needs; 4) Ensuring standards of cleanliness and hygiene are maintained by all present; 5) Dispute resolution; and 6) Being a conduit of information between the local camp and the broader community."⁷⁹³

Carlson and Eustace draw upon a document circulated by an Elder who was serving as *Sia:teleq* of a site that clarified her rules and expectations for the fishing camp. These "(t)wenty something 'fishcamp rules'," include to "establish the camps as a drug and alcohol free zone", "make sure people respect the elders", "make sure they either cut [the fish] or fish" and "make sure before anyone is brought to camp that their duties are told to them."⁷⁹⁴ Carlson and Eustace further describe the role of *Sia:teleq*, whose task...

was to regulate access to the fishery and to ensure that all family members had sufficient access for adequate supplies for the winter months. A family's *siateluq* was someone intimately familiar with the fishing grounds, as well as the family's history. Typically they were very influential people within their communities.⁷⁹⁵

Eustace and Carlson also stress that "There is no evidence to suggest that these people were required to live in the lower Canyon during fishing season. In fact evidence suggests that families were not required to live near their fishing sites."⁷⁹⁶ This pattern of sustained seasonal migration by Stó:lō people to the Canyon for purposes of fishing and related sustenance activities is clearly evident in the behaviour and experiences of Archie and his family.

Over time, a number of factors challenged and eroded the role and authority of the *Sia:teleq*: residential schools, incursion of development (such as railway, highway) into the fishcamps, the potlatch ban, the treaty process and governmental regulation of the fishery. The

⁷⁹³ Carlson and Eustace, "True Spirit", 35.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

Fisheries Act laws, however, had a particularly profound impact on Stó:lō authority to manage camps and contributed to some Stó:lō people's perspectives that they have individual "ownership" rights to a family spot. Anthropologist Kimberly Linkous Brown's analysis of how Stó:lō fishermen sought to maintain their Aboriginal Rights and Title to the fishery, including that in the Fraser Canyon, provides insight into the impact of DFO regulations on Stó:lō resource management strategies. Her interview with Stó:lō fisherman and activist Ernie Crey revealed that "ongoing intervention in the fishery has changed conceptions of who can legitimately offer access. He notes that increasingly *Siyá:m* (respected family leaders) no longer decided fishing times, sites and techniques. Instead, this role fell to fisheries officers, making them, in a sense, *Siyá:m* themselves."⁷⁹⁷

While some in the community, like Sonny McHalsie, use the term *Sia:teleq* to describe Archie, it is notable that Archie did not refer to himself in this way (he did not refer to himself as "*Siyá:m*" either). It is not clear, through our discussions, whether this was a result of his humility or whether he, himself, was not familiar with the *Halq'eméylem* term for manager of fishing grounds. Regardless of the title attached to his actions, Archie's approach to the management of his family fishing spot reflects his teachings related to sustainability and preservation of the resource. There are a number of caretaking principles outlined in the *Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual* that he enacted. The ways in which he followed cultural caretaking principles illustrates his leadership strategy. While definitions of conservation are at the heart of disputes between DFO regulators and Stó:lō dry rackers, Archie's form of leadership always had conservation at

⁷⁹⁷ Brown, "To Fish for Themselves", 85.

its core. He described to me how his ancestors, “the old people”, as well as the Bible make reference to the importance of care for the land:

It comes from the Bible I guess, Catholic I guess, we were all taught Catholic ‘don’t waste anything’ like the old people said ‘*Xólhmet te mekw’stám ít kwelát*: look after everything that’s ours’. Because that guy up there is not gonna make no more worlds. I don’t know how to say that one, but it’s right. It comes from the Bible ‘If you ruin it, it’s your fault.’⁷⁹⁸

Fishing methods have evolved dramatically over the past 100 years. Boats with powerful motors are now able to ascend the mighty waters of the Fraser Canyon; large nets can now be used to catch salmon. Archie identified the caretaking principle as “Only take what you need”, similarly expressed as “Only take what you can use.” On one occasion, he detailed to me how evolving fishing methods impacted the harvesting of salmon in ways contrary to practices of sustainability, describing how traditional techniques allowed some fish to go by:

AC: ...we didn't have them long nets then.

MG: Dip nets?

AC: could still build a platform out and then...I think it was better in them days, too. It allowed some [fish] to go by; you don’t get them all in the net. You could go right where the rock shelf sticks out, pretty near below the rack. They used to have a pulley running down. You’d catch one, put it in there, pull it up.⁷⁹⁹

On another occasion, Archie spoke of his interpretation of the cultural caretaking principle “Don’t waste, don’t ruin.” It is evident in his assertion that the amount of fish allocated to a particular family should be limited, revealing the centrality of conservation to his ethos:

⁷⁹⁸ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁷⁹⁹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

“Yeah. When [a fishing family] have four or five nets all in one place and block off they block off the whole stream, and that’s a bad one there. There should be one net per family.”⁸⁰⁰

Archie’s appreciation for conservation and reciprocation in his use and management of the hereditary fishing spot is evident in his statement: “Our Elders told me, before me, ‘don’t give away nothing until you have something in its place’, or ‘don’t change anything unless you have got something to replace it’. Like the Indian Act is changing it, and we got nothing to say about it...”⁸⁰¹ Archie also assumed caretaking for the Stó:lō gravesite located directly across the highway from his family fishing site. Archie explained that, while the names of those buried were not known to him, he was aware that the remains had been excavated and tested, proving that some of the bones were from men working on railway construction, including Chinese. The disruption of this unmarked site bothered him greatly. He took it upon himself to erect a proper marker, which we discussed:

MG: Remember a few years ago you were putting a marker up for the... you know there’s that little fence there for the graveyard there? There’s a burial site there, right? Across the highway.

AC: Oh yeah. That was moved about five times, it was on the CN side, they moved it to where the highway is now, then they had to move it again, now it’s all...the power line went through and they just knocked everything on top. They knew it was there, but no respect for nothing.⁸⁰²

Archie’s insistence that the ancestors buried at this site be treated in accordance with Stó:lō protocol illustrates one of the many ways he enacted caretaking responsibilities associated with his fishing site that were non-fishing related.

⁸⁰⁰ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁸⁰¹ Archie Charles, interview with Valerie Joe, TUS Study, March 13, 1997.

⁸⁰² Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 5 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

Archie's Legacy as *Sia:teleq*: Protection Through Inclusion and Education

Archie was respected among both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō with a vested interest in participating in the Canyon fishery. I can attest to the powerful impact being welcomed into fishcamp has on one's life. Spending time at Archie's camp over the summers of 2007, 2008, and 2009, I was exposed to the joy, work and meaning of the fishcamp experience. Far beyond providing mere sustenance, access to the Canyon fishery offers a unique opportunity to engage socially, politically, culturally and spiritually with one's family and the greater community. It is a place where people may develop a stronger sense of who they are and where they come from. Being there is central to the maintenance of Stó:lō culture. While at camp, I was taught how to clean and cut salmon using daughter Rose's unique technique of cutting left-handed. I was instructed to bring my own canning jars - how many and what size "to fill up" for my own use and that of my family. Archie, due to his decreasing mobility, assumed role as "lid tightener" on my salmon – the final step before they get cooked. (see **Figure 6.9**)

In 2009 my mother would travel from Ontario to spend time at Archie's fishcamp, finally meeting Archie, Tina and family after their many regular phone conversations. This trip reflected the extension of his family group to include my own, and vice-versa and more broadly his ethos based on sharing, inclusiveness and education. While my experience there was deeply meaningful and certainly heightened my understanding of Archie, his life and the gravity of the struggle for Stó:lō Rights and Title, I am not alone in benefitting from his hospitality. In my time at fishcamp, I was reminded of the importance of this location as a place that was truly inclusive. In addition to the influx of his immediate and extended family members who would fish, can and wind dry salmon, fishcamp was a bustling social space for many other people.

There were youth groups who visited as well as scholars from nearby Universities and field school students; newspaper reporters who would come intermittently to seek out Archie's comments on fishing related topics; and Stó:lō and (other First Nations) leaders such as Chief Clem Seymore and Grand Chief Kat Pennier who would "drop in" to chat with Archie about anything and everything.

Anyone who ever visited Archie's fishcamp knows what it means to be made to feel welcome. He brought everyone into the space and encouraged them to participate at their own comfort level. Yet despite his openness to collaboration with academics, he wasn't always pleased with their scholarly methods. He shared an example with me of granting students from a University permission to come and explore the rock wall fortifications located on his fishing grounds and not being pleased with their treatment of the site: "A delegation from [shall remain unnamed] University went up there and they wrecked it. It all went down, you can still see parts of it."⁸⁰³ Archie's strong sense of protecting the Canyon fishery through a strategy of education and inclusion – of sharing – is powerful and unique and has transformed the lives of many people, closing the gap between Stó:lō and *Xwelítem*, and teaching the sacred value of salmon in all aspects of Stó:lō life. *Nwéwtm*'s words about Archie's legacy reiterate his values:

Papa loved being up at camp. Like many Stó:lō people it's our 'home away from home'. His legacy was to ensure the art of wind drying fish was passed on to the young children and anyone who expressed interest in our way of life up in the Canyon. Today there are only so many families that preserve sockeye the way our ancestors did thousands of years ago. He was proud to pass on that knowledge whether if you were Native or non-Native.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰³ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, April 14, 2010, 2 of 6 SRRMC (Protected).

⁸⁰⁴ Zack Joe, informal correspondence with Meagan Gough, April 11, 2015.

DFO Meeting 1998: Grounding Conflict Resolution in Place

In 1998, the struggle of Stó:lō fishermen to maintain and assert their Aboriginal fishing rights culminated in an historic event. As noted by field school student Caroline Butler, “During the 1998 drying season...when the fishery was closed after only a few days, Stó:lō counsellors and Chiefs met with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to affirm Stó:lō drying rights.”⁸⁰⁵ Archie spoke of this particular event to me on a number of occasions. The meeting took place July 22, 1998, and Archie was nominated by Stó:lō leaders to host the meeting, along with his family, at his camp. This meeting provided an opportunity for Government and Stó:lō officials to meet at the Canyon fishery itself. The primary topic of discussion was the DFO’s intent to pull the Elders’ nets from the river, greatly affecting their seasonal fishing and, as a result, their sustenance. While the Chief of the Yale First Nation, Chief Hope, was “initially very supportive of the Elders, later on in the week however he asked the Elders to leave.”⁸⁰⁶ Stó:lō leader and future Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Steven Point was one of the many in attendance showing solidarity. He stated: “The Stó:lō do not want to destroy the fish stocks. We have a right to be here, to fish. The Stó:lō were here long before. Yale is one of our communities, but they are not the boss. I am not the boss. The people of the Stó:lō Nation, they are the boss....”⁸⁰⁷

Illuminating the ongoing conflict among government officials, the Yale First Nation and Stó:lō dry rackers – a conflict that had its genesis in the reserve creation system and which remains unresolved – this meeting was a powerful show of force and unity by Stó:lō fishermen.

(see Figure 6.10) As Caroline Butler observes of this event, Stó:lō “leaders rallied behind the

⁸⁰⁵ Butler, “Regulating Tradition”, 2.

⁸⁰⁶ *Sqwelqwels Ye Stó:lō Newsletter*. 1: 6, August 1998.

⁸⁰⁷ Steven Point, in *Sqwelqwels Ye Stó:lō Newsletter*. 1: 6, August 1998.

wind drying families, asserting the importance of wind drying for the Elders, refusing to subordinate the fishery to the conservation concerns of DFO.”⁸⁰⁸ The respect for his role as *Sia:teleq* that Archie carried within his community and among government representatives is evident by the decision to host this historical event at his fishcamp. In the newspaper article I located which reported Stó:lō representatives’ statements at this meeting, there was no statement from Archie; this is likely less an error of omission than it is a reflection of his show-not-tell approach both to leadership and conflict resolution. Archie spoke in 2002 about the ongoing tension between DFO and Stó:lō fishermen, which was, he thought, fuelled by a lack of understanding on the part of government bureaucrats: “DFO thinks we can stay up there all day and catch lots of fish. But salmon come on their own time, they have their own destination to get to. They know when to spawn. The sooner we get involved with self-government, the sooner DFO can start working with us instead of against us.”⁸⁰⁹

Creation of the Elders’ Communal Fishing Spot

The issues sparking the 1998 fishcamp meeting with DFO were not solely a reflection of political tensions. Rather, there was also a deep connection with long-term and ongoing efforts to bring culture and tradition to a people and a fishery that had been buffeted by colonialism. Illustrative of this, in the early 1980s, Archie suggested that a fishing site be designated to be used communally by all Stó:lō Elders who did not have access to or use of an hereditary fishcamp. The establishment of the “Elders’ Camp” serves as an example of Archie’s flexibility

⁸⁰⁸Butler, “Regulating Tradition”, 2.

⁸⁰⁹ Archie Charles, Interview *Sqwelqwels Ye Stó:lō Newsletter*, October 2002.

in terms of how access, use and control of fishcamp is defined. While camps are managed via familial connections, Archie and other community members perceived value in a place where Stó:lō Elders could fish and wind dry together, thereby serving two essential objectives: the maintenance of a long standing cultural practice, and a means to provide salmon as sustenance to families as well.

In collaboration with Stó:lō Elder and Chief of Yakwekwioose Frank Malloway (*Siyémches*),⁸¹⁰ who was working with the Coqueleetza Elders group at the time, Archie coordinated a program for Elders to use the site. Archie described the origins of the Elders' fishcamp and also why it eventually stopped being used for this purpose: "Frank Malloway... He led a meeting of all the bands, we had it up in Hope [British Columbia]. At first, they talked about the space between here and Five Mile Creek - we had too many fish, so it worked for a couple years. But then some people came up and instead of sharing the fish, they took it themselves, and it ruined it."⁸¹¹ Malloway recalled to me Archie's suggestion of a spot for the Elders to fish and indicated how it served not only as an opportunity for Elders and youth to gain access to the Canyon fishery and maintain Stó:lō cultural practices associated with fishing, but also as an attempt to resolve conflict among families:

This must have been in around 1980, there was a dispute about fishing sites and fishing camps and because Mark [Point] was the Manager [of Coqueleetza] at that time he had to deal with it. But then, Archie Charles heard about the dispute, so he said 'there's room between my camp and Jean McIntyre's camp. There used to be a fishing site there. And the Elders can go there.' So I went and took a look at it along with Gary

⁸¹⁰ On September 23, 2013, Elder Frank Malloway (*Siyémches*) was honoured in a ceremony as a Grand chief. Further illustrating the contribution of traditional knowledge keepers to scholarship, he also received an honorary Doctorate in June 2013 from University College of the Fraser Valley.

⁸¹¹ Archie Charles, interview with Meagan Gough, July 27, 2008.

Sam, and we started slashing bush because, it was just local grown, and we picked the site for the cabin and we picked the site to build the dry rack.⁸¹²

Frank Malloway further described how Archie Charles also agreed to let the Elders fish adjacent to his camp during two weeks of the dry rack season. Malloway reports: “And the agreement that Archie Charles made with the Elders was that the Elders could fish there for the two weeks of the dry rack season. So, they went there and they fished for two weeks and butchered as much as they could, they fished every day you know, for dried salmon and canning salmon. Then the next two weeks was moving things out.”⁸¹³ *Siyémches* states how youth who spent time at the Elders’ camp enjoyed hearing stories by the campfire, learning to fish, as well as clean, can and wind dry salmon and cook over an open fire. It was a precious time to learn the cultural teachings in an immersion setting. He recalls how one youth “told their mother ‘did I ever learn so much in a short time’, from their grandfather and some of the other Elders there.”⁸¹⁴

Keith Carlson, who was working as an employee at the Stó:lō Nation office at the time contextualizes the broader impact of the innovative nature of Archie’s approach to the sharing of resources and the management of hereditary sites:

There was one point there where he [Archie] said, ‘This isn’t my fishing spot anymore, it’s the elders’ fishcamp, and, you know, he just was saying this is a communal spot for all the elders, and then he said for anybody else who didn’t have a fishing spot for their own family, this is where they can come to. And that really sort of... a lot of people were really impressed by that, but I think it really should have shook some people too who felt, you know, “Oh, geez, if Archie’s doing that, maybe people are going to expect us to do that or something,” you know? So it was a pretty bold move I thought on his part, and it speaks to his sense of community and the fact that he... You know, he didn’t

⁸¹² Frank Malloway, interview with Meagan Gough, April 20, 2010, SRRMC (Protected).

⁸¹³ Ibid.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

get anything out of that. If anything he gets less, because he gets less fish because he's opening it up to other people. But that wasn't his priority.⁸¹⁵

Archie's innovative use of his family fishing resource highlights his focus on sharing and inclusion as a means of caretaking. His act of sharing, designating his hereditary spot as a shared resource for the use of the greater community, serves as an example of how to manage intra-community conflict about the nature of ownership of sites. As Carlson further observed of Archie's approach to the management of his hereditary fishing site:

The thing that strikes me about it [Archie's leadership style] is just how open Archie is to having other people come to it. Most people talk about their family fishing spot and they're loathe to share it. You know, 'This is the [family] spot', or 'This is the whatever spot,' you know, and it's for their family only, right? And that's just never been Archie's way. It's always... He invites other people to come up and to fish, and invites them to spend time there, not to just fish and leave with a fish but to like actually participate in camp life and things. And I don't know of anybody else who does that the way Archie does.⁸¹⁶

Of the unique status and leadership style that has made Archie so successful, Carlson further comments:

It [the Five Mile fishery] is contested and I think Archie, the respect people have for him as a person as well as a Grand Chief, as a political figure, has enabled him to just sort of come in and set up camp and start cleaning his cabin and people will then... they'll leave if they're not...you know, if they're fishing for just themselves, they'll move on so that Archie and everybody else that comes up with him can fish. But that doesn't happen usually at other spots. There'll be just sort of confrontations and things, but I don't know of anybody who's really confronted Archie and challenged his spot in that way.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, interview with Meagan Gough, June 20, 2009.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion: “Archie’s Up There, We Should Be Too”- Call To Stó:lō Leaders to Oversee Canyon Fishery

While the cultural authority ascribed to the *Sia:teleg* has been challenged and has eroded over time due to a variety of forces, it endured in Archie’s ability to enact his management role. Archie’s unique leadership strategy of protection of Stó:lō resources (whether they be cultural or natural) through inclusion and education has served most successfully to mediate inter- and intra-community conflicts that arise in the establishment of contemporary Aboriginal Rights and Title on the river, and serves as a model of successful leadership and conflict resolution. In 2010, despite serious health ailments and talk among family that he might not be able to make the treacherous hike downhill to camp, Archie, accompanied by his family, spent a total of 7 weeks at his camp - longer than on a typical year. Tyrone McNeil, a Seabird Island band member, fishing activist and long-time colleague of Archie’s, stated at his funeral his observation of Archie’s commitment to the fishery: “Archie’s up there, we should be too.” Colonialism has left a permanent, indelible impact on the hereditary fishcamps of the Fraser River, whose history serves as a microhistory of the struggle of Stó:lō people to renew, remember and maintain their cultural history and practices. And yet, it would appear that there are certain methods by which these impacts may be circumvented: through the sharing of stories and through the ground-truthing of the place itself. The places themselves have stories, but it is the Stó:lō keepers of those stories who carry the ability and responsibility to tell them, which defines the meaning, value and purpose of a place over time and links the stories to a vision of the future. The power of the teachings that Archie and other *Siya:m* of his generation brought to cultural, familial, political and economic leadership has taken deep root. Passed from Archie’s generation to the

next, just as it was passed from Archie's Elders to him, the leadership style that emphasizes role modeling, sharing and mediation lives on. Without Archie, Tina and other knowledge keepers of their generation to explain that when the flower blooms it's time to fish, the blossoms will be seen as just another flower on the side of the highway. There is a magic, mystery and fluid nature to all such stories and teachings that inform Stó:lō understandings of what Archie refers to as "a home away from home."

CONCLUSION: YOU NEVER SIT BY THE SAME RIVER TWICE - ASSESSING THE
LEGACY OF ARCHIE CHARLES AND THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IN
RECORDING HIS TOLD-TO NARRATIVE



The morning of November 29, 2014 was a cold, crisp and windy day. *Nwéwtm* and I sat quietly in the living room of Archie's home in Seabird Island, watching the early morning sun come up behind the mountains. Breaking our silence, we reflected on the similarity between the weather of this day and that of Archie's funeral four years earlier. Today was the day of the four-year memorial for Archie Charles to be held at the Chehalis Longhouse near Mission, B.C. A Stó:lō memorial involves four days and four nights of preparation in the longhouse by family and a host of other people providing spiritual, emotional and practical support leading up to and during the event. In addition to the family, some of the people involved in preparations and the rehearsal for Archie's memorial included singers, drummers, spiritual and cultural advisors, the longhouse hosts and speaker hired on behalf of the family, floor managers to assist with coordination of the day's events and cooks. Event preparations are practical as well as spiritual and emotional in nature and with an anticipated attendance of 300-500 people, the logistics are complex. It is of great concern to the host family that the events flow smoothly. I was deeply honoured to be asked to be a part of this event as a granddaughter and to stay with Tina and family at Archie's home to participate in the four days and four nights of preparation. Highlighting my dual role of chronicler and family member, daughter Rose had asked in advance to utilize the Eulogy I had written for the funeral in 2010 in a portion of the memorial where the speaker described Archie's *sqwélqwel* and accomplishments.

Spiritual rituals and ceremonies took place in the days leading up to the memorial to help prepare us for the event. Family friend and spiritual advisor John Cayou and his family also stayed at Archie's home for two days. Cayou, a long time winter dancer from the Upper Skagit Tribal Band, in Washington State, has hosted burnings for Archie's family over the past seven years. He provided spiritual support and encouragement to the family in the days prior to the memorial and participated in the day's events. Cayou spoke on the longhouse floor, as he did to me over coffee in Archie's kitchen, about how certain spiritual and ceremonial elements of the memorial were to be "recorded with our hearts" and that we may listen, learn and watch but there are to be no descriptions or recordings of the private aspects of the ceremony. Cayou's words highlight the importance within the Stó:lō world of caring for and protecting cultural knowledge and practices, in particular those maintained within the longhouse. Though a public event, portions of the memorial involved the passing on of cultural knowledge and practices (songs, dances, words, *sqwélqwel*, *sxwōxwiyám*) some of which are intended to be experienced, not explained or replicated. Chehalis Longhouse speaker Willie Charlie, hired by the family to speak on behalf their behalf at the event, made a similar comment at the official start of the memorial, instructing attendees that "no photography or video recording of what will now take place is allowed, including drawings or depictions of dancers and their regalia."

The memorial itself culminated in the presentation to attendees of photos of Archie, wrapped in blankets, followed by their uncovering. According to tradition, photos of the deceased are to be uncovered or turned around only after the Memorial four years following the person's passing. While there is variation in how strictly this is practiced by different Salish families, Chehalis Longhouse speaker Willie Charlie explained that this ritual signifies and marks publicly a shift from a period of grieving and mourning to one of celebration, commemorating the life of the deceased as well as a new era based on integrating their teachings and experiences. With the uncovering of Archie's photo, we all now transition from a period of grief to one of celebration of his legacy.

Now, at the end of this dissertation, I reflect on the goals I set out to achieve: to produce both an analytical life history of Stó:lō Elder Archie Charles within the told-to genre as well as an academic reflection on the process of undertaking that collaborative research. What does Archie's life history reveal about Stó:lō and, more broadly, the writing of Native-Newcomer history in the past century? What does this research process reveal about the local value, form and function of collaborative research methods to record such histories?

Life After Death: The Passing of Grand Chief and Elder Archie Charles

The conclusion of Archie Charles' life history began with his passing November 30, 2010. He had struggled physically in the months leading up to this day, despite having spent seven weeks living at fishcamp in July and August. Tina remarked that, in the days leading up to his passing, he had proposed marriage to her one final time, highlighting both the ongoing tension and flexibility on which his spiritual/religious ethos rested. It also highlighted a core value of Archie's: that he was willing to break from tradition (familial, cultural and religious) when his heart told him to. While fully committed to Archie, the untimely passing of her two previous husbands had caused Tina to reject Archie's earlier proposals. In her quiet, accepting way, Tina reflected that "I watched him suffer so much I was just glad he went where he was going, that's the only healing part for me."⁸¹⁸

Archie's funeral was held at Seabird Island on Saturday, December 4th - a cold, clear day. The ceremony reflected the love and respect afforded to Archie by members of his community

⁸¹⁸ Tina Jack, interview with Meagan Gough, February 17, 2011.

and beyond, with hundreds of people attending the service at the Seabird Island gymnasium. His funeral further illuminated his sustained syncretic spiritual practice and the characteristic way in which he lived his life: his self-determination in selecting and interpreting the Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō teachings most suited to him at a given time. The ceremony included traditional rituals: drumming, speeches and the use of cedar to “brush off” attendees. The service also included Roman Catholic elements, including the singing of Christian hymns and Christian prayer.

At the funeral, I was invited to participate as one of his granddaughters. Tina remarked in the days leading up to the funeral that “he always saw you as his granddaughter.” The day before the funeral, Archie’s daughter Rose Charles asked me if I would write the eulogy because I “spent so much time talking to Papa [Archie].” This honour highlighted my dual role as historian and granddaughter.

Four Year Memorial for Grand Chief Archie Charles: Chehalis Longhouse November 29, 2014

Preparations by the family for the memorial event had commenced only days following Archie’s funeral in 2010. While Archie was not a longhouse winter-dancer himself, daughter Rose explained to me in the days following the event that even though he did not “wear the paint”⁸¹⁹, the decision to host his memorial at the longhouse was made by consensus with Tina and *Nwéwn*, as it could accommodate more guests than the Seabird Island gym.

⁸¹⁹ A phrase which refers to the face paint worn by longhouse dancers. The paint, and more specifically colour, is a reflection of their identity within the longhouse and commitment to associated practices and traditions.

Over the past four years, efforts by family to prepare for the giveaway portion of the memorial were extensive and included saving for the purchase of gifts, craft nights and preparation of food such as salmon and jams for gifting. As presented in Chapter One, scholar of Salish history Michael Kew observes:

Funerals had always been potlatch occasions, that is, times when ritual services were required of nonkin and reciprocated with gifts, and although these gradually incorporated elements of Christian services they preserved Indian belief about the dead and dependence on ritualists to attend to the dead and their possessions.⁸²⁰

Given this context, it was a privilege for me to accept the family's invitation to contribute to the preparations for the give-away portion of the memorial. On behalf of my family, we harvested lavender and wrapped it into bundles to be given away. During the giveaway portion of the ceremony Archie's great granddaughter Natasha John "*Talks a lot*" and I worked as a pair with me holding all sorts of gifts including canned salmon and jams, fresh fruit and homemade crafts that she selected from and ran to attendees sitting in the bleachers. The giveaway took place near the end of the event and reflects a sense of levity brought about after the intensity and success of the spiritual work done during the memorial. On the day of the memorial, following the seating of families in the longhouse (organized into clusters of other longhouses and communities) but prior to the "work" of the memorial beginning, a lengthy and thoughtful process of calling witnesses took place. Speaker Willie Charlie called attendees by name, using primarily ancestral names. At that point, the designated individual would stand in front of all gathered and accept responsibility to witness the event. Following this part of the ceremony, the family gathered and we walked to the longhouse floor. In groups of four, we placed quarters in

⁸²⁰ Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900", 476.

the hands of the witnesses, symbolizing an acknowledgement, payment and exchange for their work and the value of their accepted role.

Archie Charles' Life History: Research Process as Product

As Greek philosopher Heraclitus reflected, "Everything flows, nothing stands still." Therein lies the truth of how time impacts the relationships at the core of research and thus how time shaped both the opportunities and limitations of this project. After a decade of community-based research, I have come to recognize that collaboration with First Nations people works best when it is conducted in a fully engaged, respectful listening methodology that accounts for cultural belief and protocol. It is through these protocols that one is provided with not only glimpses but perhaps open windows into the ordering and structure of Indigenous thought processes that make knowledge knowable across cultural gulfs. I accept that this project is not what I envisioned it to be when I set out; however, the narrative continues through Archie's death and informs this work. There is no prescriptive template or theory to follow when working in a deeply engaged way with people. However, there is one philosophical principle that I believe can be applied universally: space and time must be allowed for academic methods, perspectives, theories and truths to remain fluid. We must continually challenge our current understanding and be willing to adjust them in accordance with the local, cultural and historical context within which we learn, work and teach. I have sought to allow the Stó:lō people I work with to teach me the best methodological tools to use to engage in meaningful cross-cultural scholarship.

Doing community-based research in an effective and meaningful way requires acting as a translator between the worlds of two or more stakeholders (in this case; Archie, his family, SRRMC, Seabird Island, the greater Stó:lō community and the academic world) who share some mutual goals, yet may have distinct, even divergent, motivations and interests. It is my hope that this work provides further depth and breadth to existing research not only in the substantive fields of Aboriginal history, but also in terms of how scholars may engage in meaningful, respectful and culturally appropriate ways with the people who are contributing the gift of their words, knowledge, time and effort. As noted in the introductory chapter, throughout the course of this work I kept in mind the ethical dimensions of community-engaged research, particularly works that result in the type of collaborative authorship Greg Sarris pointed out:

One party may write a story, but one party's story is no more the whole story than a cup of water is the river. While this may seem obvious, it underscores what it is when we tell, transcribe or write about oral texts. Basically, in one form or another, when we deal with oral texts, whether orally or literally, we continue their life in very specific ways.⁸²¹

As I noted in Chapter One, Archie's humorous remarks about photographing him making an "Indian toothpick" alerted and reaffirmed to me the "politics of representation" at the heart of collaborative authorship that scholars such as McCall, Geertz, White, Clifford and Marcus, Cruikshank and others have been saying over the past forty years. However, listening in an engaged and respectful way does not circumvent the politics of representation that rest at the core of anthropological and historical representations, particularly those based on cultural and oral narratives and histories. Arguably, being so deeply engaged at a community level has provided me with a unique position: to assess not only what Archie has stated and his family can

⁸²¹ Sarris, *Slug Woman*, 40.

verify, but has also furnished a context in which to interpret his silences through other methods. Similarly, central to this project is a reflection of how scholars can balance the expectations and obligations of the university institution and the communities, families and individuals they work with (especially cross-culturally). Beyond consent, what are the ethical considerations involved in ethnohistorical Aboriginal told-to narratives? As a work of what scholars Gingell and Roy call “textualized orature”, throughout I’ve reflected on how I acted on my concerns about the politics of representation.

Along with many other scholars cited throughout this work whose scholarship involves recording Aboriginal oral narratives (Basso, Carlson, Cruikshank, Schaepe, Archibald, Daly, Sarris) I believe that one way to achieve this balance is to seek to understand and honour local cultural protocols associated with the transmission of knowledge and the pre-existing systems of authority within a given community. Addressing critical appraisal and verification must be done locally and with cultural values and practices in mind. It is important to revisit here the Stó:lō belief that ancestral spirits can guide words and actions. As stated in Chapter One:

(M)any Coast Salish consider that on certain (possibly most or all) occasions, *sqwélqwel* are composed and shared not only with the intention of telling people how things happened, or what happened, but also to create special spiritual contexts. Emotions are generally regarded as being directed or guided by omnipresent ancestral spirits.⁸²²

My own experiences and understanding of this dimension of learning have informed this work. Archie’s passing left me immensely saddened for quite some time. As with so many who knew him, I felt greatly the loss of his presence. Archie’s passing during the midst of this project

⁸²² Carlson, “Indigenous Memory”, 5.

had a profound impact on my ability to move forward with the dissertation in the timeframe I had originally established. Given the reality that I no longer had the opportunity to work with him, I spent much of the year following his death reviewing our recorded oral history interviews, as well as the interviews I conducted with community members and relatives. In order to move towards completion of the project, the clear next step was to turn to the family, who have participated in the project and who could verify, contextualize and supplement the knowledge Archie shared prior to his passing. However, the Stó:lō have cultural protocols associated with death that I felt I needed to account for. For example, as discussed above, all pictures and representations of the deceased are removed from walls or covered, and in the practice of some families, any direct mention of the individual's name is forbidden. While there is individual variation in the practice of these protocols, in some families it may take four years before there is any direct mention of the individual. Only once the memorial ceremony has taken place does this change.

Consequently, in 2010-2011, little progress was made on this project. In early 2011, I asked Archie's great-grandson if he was interested in reviewing some documents together, and his simple answer was "not now". He further responded he was "not sure when" it would be time. This was all I needed to know to believe that it was simply too soon to work together on the project. At times such as this, understanding is privileged over explanation. Working with Archie's family members was essential to fill in "gaps" in Archie's oral history and to engage in a critical process of contextualizing and verifying his oral testimony. Therefore the project was temporarily in limbo. So while I continually re-enrolled in school, I was not making significant headway. I determined that the life history project might not take the form of this PhD

dissertation. Yet, I knew that all of the interview recordings, genealogical research, military records, and - fundamentally - the relationships created between me and the family were of immediate and long standing benefit. However, it so happened that as time passed, many photos of Archie on the walls were turned back around, facing outwards. This and other cues indicated family members seemed ready to discuss this project again. And so, with the help of Archie's family who provided supplementary information via interviews and photos and the support of my advisor and dissertation committee, I sit here writing this. In his analysis of oral narratives, Raymond J. DeMallie stresses the importance of fully considering Aboriginal views of the purpose, value and meaning of oral narratives. If not, "the effect is a bit like combining lines from two different plays with radically different plots and definitions of characters; the result, while aesthetically pleasing, fails to represent either of the originals accurately."⁸²³ And in her discussion of the nature of oral narratives, Julie Cruikshank further observes: "Orally narrated accounts about the past explicitly embrace subjective experience."⁸²⁴ It is worthwhile therefore, to note that Archie's friends and family had determined that the project was supported by ancestral spirits, who enabled opportunities for "the words to flow." This further demonstrates that, particularly in the realm of sacred or spiritual knowledge, there is value if not necessity, in suspending the impulse to seek explanations in lieu of reaching understandings. I simply did not need to "know" all things in explicit detail to understand.

⁸²³ Raymond DeMallie, "'These Have No Ears': Narrative and the Ethnohistorical Method," *Ethnohistory*, 40, 4 (Fall 1993) 515-38, 522.

⁸²⁴ Julie Cruikshank, "Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues," *Canadian Historical Review*, 3, (1994): 403-421, 408.

Second, protocols associated with the transmission of *sqwélqwel* (such as the kind that Sonny McHalsie advised me of) impacted this work. He made the valuable suggestion to interview those other than Archie about his achievements given that the humility of the speaker may be compromised if they are to tell their story in all its glory. Third, taking into account Archie's show-not-tell style of narration and leadership and his untimely passing during our project led me to seek to contextualize, if not verify, the nature of his omissions, silences and private memories. The result here is a project based on the participation of many to weave together this version of his life story. It has become a told-to narrative created by many, a kind of polyvore reflecting the style of family-based research we engaged in. It would seem in retrospect that this learning process was meant to unfold in the two complete four-year periods, unbeknownst to me at the outset, mirroring that of the life cycle of the salmon.

Listening with Our Hearts: Being Taught as Scholars How to Listen Locally

“Heart” is not something generally referred to in academic spheres as either a motivator or filter for research. And yet it is a crucial element in our understandings and eventual interpretations and representations, especially so when the project is a cross-cultural one. It is also a major component of and inherent in collaborative research models. To further clarify: when I use the term “heart”, I mean attentive, open-minded listening and empathy for both the shared and distinct elements of our personal and collective histories, and the humility and patience to appreciate the value of what cannot be immediately known, analyzed, or categorized.

Michael Harkin's 2003 article “Feeling and Thinking in Memory and Forgetting: Toward an Ethnohistory of the Emotions” represents a shift in epistemology and methodology with

regard to the role of Indigenous people in the construction of Indigenous histories. The article further represents a significant evolution from the considerations of social science research done in the 1950s, wherein scientific rigour and objectivity were celebrated as the ideals. Harkin observes the “canons of objectivism and scientific detachment have defined the fields of anthropology and history throughout most of the twentieth century”⁸²⁵, something this new type of research seeks to refute. Harkin argues that researchers should “take emotion seriously as a mode of experience and category of analysis”⁸²⁶ in cultural studies.⁸²⁷ The ethnographic third is an “analytic space that is neither that of the ethnographer nor that of his subject but is actively constructed by them both.”⁸²⁸ What is especially important and relevant for ethnohistory, he argues, is the “privileging of emotionally charged space that appears not only in the ethnographic encounter, but in the historical encounters between members of different societies.”⁸²⁹ Harkin speculates what the future focus of ethnographic and ethnohistorical research may be, namely: “the indigenous responses to colonial encounters that remain to be explored in all their emotional

⁸²⁵ Michael Harkin, “Feeling and Thinking in Memory and Forgetting: Toward an Ethnohistory of the Emotions,” *Ethnohistory*, 50:2 Spring (2003): 262.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

⁸²⁷ For an example of ethnographic work with these features see anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano’s concept of the “ethnographic third”, in “Hermes’ Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description,” *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*,” edited by James Clifford and George E Marcus (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1986). For Crapanzano’s continued influence on interpretive ethnography, see his student Marjorie Shostak’s exceptional ethnography, *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, First Vintage Books Edition, 1981).

⁸²⁸ Harkin, “Feeling and Thinking”, 267.

⁸²⁹ Ibid.

and historical specificity.”⁸³⁰ He concludes, “It is to that specificity that ethnohistory must now turn.”⁸³¹

All Knowledge is Local Knowledge: The Importance of Experiencing Places as a Means of Understanding Personal and Cultural Experience

As noted in the Introduction, many of my interviews with Archie and his family took place at their home on Seabird Island. However, I recognized that it was crucial to interview Archie at his Canyon fishcamp, where I could learn from him and his family by communing together in this more sacred place. Fishcamp has an ineffable quality. Its beauty is stark, majestic and powerful; the roaring sound of the river, over time, becomes both a lullaby and a beckoning to awake each morning with purpose. The warm, early July breezes, so perfect for wind drying fish, swirl over the water and through the Canyon, while leaving the pine, cedar and spruce trees up the banks completely still. It is warm and dry at fishcamp nearly the entire months of July and August. At night, the stars dance and sparkle in the clear skies above and if you choose to view them, the best place at Archie’s camp is atop a rock, warmed into the night from the heat it still holds from the day’s sun. There you can lie quietly, alone or among family and friends, and be still in this majestic wonder, this place that seamlessly connects past, present and future. Here there sometimes appears to be no time; there is only this place. It is here that you can literally stumble across carvings, stones, tools, or what archaeologists refer to as “artifacts”, that ground you in a sense of connectedness to this place, and the continuity of being

⁸³⁰ Ibid.

⁸³¹ Harkin, “Feeling and Thinking”, 278.

there that forms the strongest and most brilliant threads in the tapestry of Stó:lō life, identity and history.

Fishcamp also bears the scars of modernity, colonialism and the intrusion of non-Stó:lō government and large corporations. Department of Fisheries and Oceans helicopters roar through the Canyon at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and sometimes throughout the day to observe the nets in the river, the catch hanging on the racks and the number of people in the camps. The CN tracks directly above camp are always in use - the continual train traffic shakes all of camp and creates a deafening noise, sometimes multiple times an hour throughout the day and night. Pre-packaged foods, a small TV to watch movies on and card games at night among family are all a part of camp life. In his exemplary work *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places* (New York: Viking Press, 2006), anthropologist Peter Nabokov writes about the complexity and diversity of American Indian sacred places and common stereotypes which surround them. He observes that it is a “mistaken idea that before the arrival of Europeans, the religious attitudes of Indians towards the natural world were frozen in time.”⁸³² He further argues that Indigenous relationships to places of power were always adaptive, with innovation being central: “like societies everywhere, American Indian cultures and their religious systems are the products of [a] tug-of-war between historical change and inherited traditions.”⁸³³ He concludes: “One need not romanticize Indian attitudes toward nature in order to acknowledge

⁸³² Peter Nabokov, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places* (New York: Viking Press, 2006), xiii.

⁸³³ Ibid.

that attitudes and ethics about beings and forces that reside in the natural environment and the wider universe were and remain a bedrock of American Indian belief systems.”⁸³⁴

In keeping with this perception, it becomes clear that the value and meaning of a particular cultural landscape cannot be fully known through maps, rather it is found in human interaction with the place, the stories and memories linked to it, which illuminate the sustained relationship between people and land over time. Thus, despite superficial tension between modern and traditional uses of fishcamp, in the Stó:lō world, fishcamp continues to function as a place to engage with tangible elements of the environment as well as the intangible: the *sxwōxwiyám*, *sqwélqwel* and *shxwelí* that inform a personal and collective sense of being. In providing this opportunity for learning and communing, fishcamp becomes much more than a geographic location on a map, it becomes the “home away from home”⁸³⁵ that Archie referred to it as. It is a place to be Stó:lō. It is also a place where there is an intermingling of multiple identities and relationships between self, family, community, ancestors and those yet to be born.

The year 2008 was significant for Archie, as it was the first year he was physically unable to make it down the banks of the Canyon from fishcamp to check the nets himself. Only one year prior, in 2007, he had hiked with his cane up into the canopy with a machete and chopped down yew wood to use for his BBQ rack cooker. He also used the machete to clear overgrown

⁸³⁴ Ibid, xiv.

⁸³⁵ Literary scholar Edward Chamberlin more fully explores the relationship between Aboriginal views of places and territories and notions of “home” in *If This is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?: Finding Common Ground* (Toronto: A. A. Knopf Canada, 2004), poignantly stating: “Whatever and wherever it is, home is always border country, a place that separates and connects us, a place of possibility for both peace and perilous conflict.” (3)

brush by the cemetery. He accepted his new limitations, albeit with some sadness and an accompanying feeling of self-described uselessness. For a man who had spent his entire life being physically active and teaching via a process of showing not telling, such limitations were particularly challenging. Somehow, being there with him on the rocks, interviewing him about his life experiences, seemed to dull that feeling, if only temporarily. Literary scholar Jack Healy's writings about the relationship between memory and the land reiterate the power of land in shaping our understandings of ourselves, and others. "Memory, Visibility and Man stand over against what without Memory, become Invisibility and Fate. If you take a context from an act it becomes a shadow: If you take a landscape from a people they are lost."⁸³⁶ Through spending time with Archie at fishcamp, the words of his ancestors, which he shared on many occasions - "*Xólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát*. We have to look after everything that belongs to us"- take on new meaning.

Eating the Eyeball: Trust as Symbiotic and Building Trust and Rapport Over Time

What distinguishes our collaboration from a life history interview that might have been conducted with Archie in a only a month's time? I argue it is time, context, trust and rapport. Trust is symbiotic. Our initial understandings, categorizations of the stories and experiences of others remain insufficiently contextualized if this trust does not exist. This symbiotic process is highlighted by my experience of being introduced to eating a fish eyeball while at fishcamp in

⁸³⁶ Healy, "Literature, Removal and Theme of Invincibility", 136. A focus of Healy's analysis of memory and autochthony (and still relevant to a discussion of memory, orality, and literacy) is Francis Yeates's exemplary work *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

2007. There was lots of teasing of me from Archie and family during that time about the eyeball that was going to be prepared for me on my last night. “It’s for honoured guests,” Archie said in a way that left me not knowing what to believe. I thought it was all teasing until, on my last night, I was instructed by Tina to sit down and a ball of tinfoil that had been warming on the fire pit was brought before me. Family and friends gathered around. Tina instructed me to open the tinfoil and in it was... an eyeball. It was much larger than I had ever envisioned a salmon’s eyeball being. Archie laughed: “There’s your eyeball, it tastes good.” I took a deep breath, as up until this point I had never dreamed of eating the eyeball of anything and in fact was somewhat repulsed by the idea. However, Tina sat beside me and instructed me as to how I should eat it, noting that it would have distinct sensations while I bit through it but that it was loaded in nutrients that indeed made it highly cherished. I took a deep breath and started to eat it. I actually ended up not minding it, but above and beyond that, I enjoyed it because at that moment I had so much trust in Tina, Archie and their family to take care of me, to not put me in harm’s way or to lie to me. Upon reflection, I also enjoyed it because I embraced it as a gift from them to me. As Tina explained, the eyeball contained all the oils that were good for you and was considered a delicacy by some Stó:lō, especially past generations. However, afterwards, I recall asking Archie’s great-grandson Zack Joe (*Nwéwtm*) if he’d ever eaten the eyeball, to which he responded “No way!” The following year at fishcamp, Tina’s daughter Caroline gave me a plastic eyeball on my last night as a joke to reference the event: “You don’t have to eat it again this year.” (See **Figure 7.1**)

The eyeball experience illuminates more broadly the value of building trust and rapport over time, especially when learning cross-culturally, so as not to make unwarranted assumptions.

While a delicacy to some, assuming all Stó:lō people cherished the eyeball would be a false generalization. Such generalizations worked the other way, too. While at fishcamp, I brought with me a hot water bottle, sometimes used by my grandma and mother for warmth at bedtime which was particularly useful when sleeping out in the elements. Tina laughed one day, remarking “none of us Indians bring a hot water bottle to camp. Do all white people use those things?” It was illustrative of how incorrect generalized and homogenous assumptions about cross-cultural practice and tradition can be.

Ensuring Local Benefits of Research

This project was conceived with the intent to ensure that it resulted in direct local benefits: some of which were apparent at the outset and some of which emerged throughout the process of this work. First, and most broadly, the recording of life stories of Stó:lō Elders was considered timely by Stó:lō people I spoke with during my earlier Master’s thesis research and by staff at the SRRMC, who reviewed and approved this project. It is hoped that recording the life experiences and ethos of a known and respected leader may be a valuable step towards providing a written form of ‘evidence’ of Stó:lō cultural values, as well as the connection to Stó:lō territory (*S’olh Téméxw*) that is currently required to define valuable policy at the community, provincial and federal levels. Broadly, this work is linked to Stó:lō assertions of self-governance and self-determination and can supplement the current position taken by Stó:lō Tribal Council, Stó:lō Nation, the Seabird Island community and Stó:lō families who access and maintain hereditary fishing sites in the Fraser Canyon to establish Rights and Title to *S’olh Téméxw*.

The second intended benefit of this work is to honour and give back to Archie's family in a meaningful way. This dissertation places parameters on the form and product of this version of his life history. As a result, family members and I have discussed the creation of a second version of Archie's life history that omits my academic analytical voice (expressed in the language of academics), and reduces my voice as collaborator and chronicler, simply presenting the narrative of Archie's life history as recorded through our work together. The creation of this audio-visual work of "textualized orature" highlights the distinct value of orality prior to translation into writing, and provides an opportunity for Archie's speech to be heard after his passing. It will also provide a locally relevant means to include the oral and video recordings that are part of this work outside the scope of the dissertation, but which have deep meaning and significance to his family and the greater Stó:lō community as oral testimony. It is a record of the family's *sqwélqwel*, including their participation in the recording of his narrative.

The third benefit of this research is Archie's receipt of the Order of Canada prior to his passing. This honour served to recognize him publicly within his own community as a residential school survivor, veteran of WWII and successful leader while simultaneously transmitting his story and recognition into the public realm and historical record.

Finally, our research process has arguably benefitted all of us through the development of meaningful relations through the family's continued practice of "taking in" non-family outsiders, which carries forward Archie's legacy. As such, this research process creates new insight into Native-Newcomer history by providing not only an articulation of the life story of a member of Archie's generation of Indigenous people, but also the ways in which Native people make

meaning out of the research processes that have been so much a part of their lives over the past century. In doing so, this research has also revealed new insights into family, kinship, power, authority, class and knowledge in the Stó:lō community.

Re-imagining Community-Based Research as Family-Based Research in Archie's Narrative

This dissertation picks up on the related themes of holism, relational accountability and research as ecstatic experience discussed in Chapter One by focusing on reciprocation and honouring the sustained impacts of research on personal, family and community dynamics. The role Archie ascribed to me was twofold: researcher and also granddaughter. Archie clearly saw the difference in these roles but did not see them as incompatible; in fact, these overlapping roles deepened our communication, as they were mutually beneficial roles that fit positively in the ways in which cultural knowledge is linked to cultural authority. Consequently, this work has the potential to further reveal the flexible and adaptive ways in which Stó:lō families “take in” outsiders and the ways in which Indigenous peoples make sense of their history with newcomers. Nowhere was this practice more apparent than on our first of four nights we spent in the longhouse. The family was invited to a meeting in the back room of the longhouse. There, the family comingled with the many others who would be participating in the memorial (floor managers, singers, Elders, spiritual advisors and floor speakers). A series of prayers were rendered and then it was requested that a nominated speaker from Archie's family speak his *sqwélqwel* so that those other participants may fully understand the familial connections between Archie's adopted and biological families and their own. As one Elder remarked “we are all connected”. Caroline stood on behalf of the family and recounted Archie's connections through

his biological and adoptive paternal and maternal lines. She sat down and was thanked for sharing this. Others in the room then stood and spoke how their family was connected to Archie or one of his ancestors. Following this, Caroline stood back up and gestured towards me, seated beside her. “And this is Meagan Gough. She’s from Ontario. Papa adopted her.” The one Elder simply nodded and stated “Our people have always adopted.” (See Figure 7.2)

Told-to Narratives as a Vehicle to Add Depth to Native-Newcomer Historiographic Relations

What insight has Archie’s life history, as presented here, added to our current understanding of Native-Newcomer history? First, as a post-disciplinary told-to narrative that draws upon tools of anthropology, history and ethnohistory in a context-sensitive manner, it provides an account of the experience of a member of Archie’s generation. Archie’s life narrative thus adds to our current understanding of residential school histories, particularly the syncretic ways in which members of his generation as well as previous Stó:lō generations as recounted in Mary’s life history illustrate. It also enriches our understanding of Aboriginal military and veterans history, including the ways in which Aboriginal communities such as the Stó:lō imagined and re-imagined their veterans in light of cultural definitions of warrior and warfare. Archie’s narrative also reveals the development of Indigenous governance and political leadership in a transitional era, as well as some of ways in which contemporary Stó:lō Rights and Title are expressed in the management of their cultural and natural resources. Broadly, his life narrative demonstrates the ways in which innovation and tradition may be understood as intermingling with one another rather than in opposition.

In doing so, it adds depth to Stó:lō historiography and the history of Native-Newcomer relations, particularly in the last century. It gives a more complete voice to a member of a particular generation of Indigenous people and illustrates there is value not just in what is communicated, but in the cultural values, protocols and practices linked to how history is communicated in a given culture. The project also serves as a case study that further demonstrates the conclusions drawn by scholars Carlson, Cruikshank, Geertz, Smith and others. It has further alerted us that lingering dualisms about Indigenous experience are neither relevant nor accurate because they fail to give full acknowledgement to the flexible, dynamic, fluid and highly personalized ways Indigenous people like Archie integrate their traditions into their present visioning for their lives and future. Dualisms that place at odds innovation and tradition, spiritual practice and Christianity, victimization and agency, assimilation and resistance, honouring the past and visioning for the future ignore or overlook the ways that members of Archie's generation (as well as his ancestors) adapted and responded, accepted and rejected elements of Native and newcomer practices and norms in sometimes highly nuanced ways. An exploration of Archie's life reveals that he was continually and appropriately innovative in the practice of his cultural traditions and expression of his cultural identity.

Through an analysis of Archie's life, including an interpretation of his familial and cultural teachings, passed on by his parents, we can conclude that despite having been victimized by the proven oppression and subversion of Stó:lō culture and history, Archie and his ancestors were firmly agents within their own lives. It is apparent that the myriad of Stó:lō traditional practices have always involved visioning for the future. Our project adds to recent histories that desire to include Native perspectives on newcomers more fully into the historical record. This

told-to narrative does this through an analysis of the ways in which one individual (Archie), and consequently his family and community, made meaning out of their relationships with non-Native people and one another in a time of great change.

Second, the dissertation is a critical reflection on the research process and its sustained impacts on the lives of Indigenous peoples. This work explores how one individual, family and community have made meaning out of their relationships with researchers. How Archie and his family made meaning out of our relationship, which incorporated my dual role as chronicler and granddaughter, demonstrates further how dualisms of insider and outsider were not relevant, but rather reconciled and made culturally meaningful. It was only through personally engaging over a long period of time (in our case, ten years) in community and family events, regular phone calls and letter writing, at fishcamp as well as hosting Archie's family in my home – that I gained the opportunity to see how Archie did not place the role of researcher and adopted family member at odds. Quite the contrary; he fit me into his cultural norms, practices and systems and made meaning out of our relationship in highly personalized and local ways. Based on a sustained dialogue and presence in one another's lives, this life history serves to more fully illuminate the flexible, adaptive and persistent ways in which Stó:lō hereditary systems of resource management, (as well as its transmission via *sqwélqwel*), survived despite the disruption and dislocation attested to in this told-to narrative by Archie and others.

What has been accomplished in our sustained dialogue over a period of years that could not have been carried out in one or even several closely timed interviews over the course of a month with Archie about his life history? First, it provided an opportunity to ensure that there

are local benefits of research that extend beyond the dissertation itself. Second, it facilitated learning from Stó:lō knowledge keepers about how to engage in a meaningful way in accordance with local values, traditions and protocols, valuing both the oral history and oral tradition which governs its transmission. Third, it allowed for trust, rapport and context to be built up over time so that I may be more poised to play a meaningful role within the family and seek to interpret, along with his family, not only Archie's words, but also his silences. Fourth and finally, it revealed the pervasiveness of Stó:lō protocols for transmission of oral history that encompass the research process. In this revelation, it has accomplished much over a period of years that a shorter term of fieldwork attempting to chronicle Archie's life experiences could not: the ways in which Native people make meaning out of their relationships with newcomers. Rendering our relationship part of the *sqwélqwel* itself adds another tree ring in the story of Archie, his ancestors and those yet unborn.

In conclusion, this research has revealed that there are no universal theories and applications of collaborative research. Participatory research theory and the contributions of other scholars provide a basic understanding of the practice of doing research, but they cannot be prescriptive. I argue that collaborative oral history research, if it is truly to be such, is always grounded in specificities of time and place, as well as within the context set by memory, orality, voice and relationships. In the case of doing cross-cultural research with Archie Charles and members of the greater Stó:lō community, I have come to appreciate that knowledge is not only born out of people, but of the land and to learn of this knowledge the value of engaging deeply with people in the places they live, to make meaning out of their histories. The reflections

presented in this project are not prescriptive; rather, they are intended to be considerations of research practice upon which future researchers may reflect.

Archie's Legacy: Protection of Stó:lō Culture Through Education and Inclusion, Vision for the Future

Archie's legacy is the culmination of his life teachings: to show-not-tell who he was; to successfully and peacefully mediate conflict with few words, in accordance with the traditions of a *Siyá:m* and his father Dave Charles; to act decisively, yet with compassion and understanding, as he learned while overseas. His strong sense of the importance of self-determination for his community is witnessed in his actions using local resources to improve community and exemplified by his focus on reserve development, sustainable housing, building the Catholic Church on reserve, launching and sustaining the Seabird Island Cultural Festival, and working to maintain Rights and Title to a range of Stó:lō resources. His belief in equality while honouring difference is perhaps best reflected in his strategic selection of non-Stó:lō allies who shared similar goals in the protection of Stó:lō culture. Most importantly, his strategy of protection through education and inclusion did not require him to forego his Stó:lō identity. Rather, similar to his adoptive parents, he combined tools gained from interaction with *Xwelítem* to gain leverage in a rapidly changing world. As scholars like Biersack, Lutz, Cole and others suggest, Indigenous agency has remained a constant over time and was central to community response to colonial forces over the past century. Narratives such as Archie's reveal that Aboriginal peoples have continually found new ways to be different throughout history, carrying forward their traditions in ways that are meaningful and serve a utilitarian purpose. Archie has been recognized both internally (being named one of the first Stó:lō Grand Chiefs) as well as

externally (the Order of Canada) for his contribution to strengthening his community of Seabird Island and his successful means of creating dialogue and resolving conflict cross-culturally, as well as within his community. His legacy is apparent in his family's continued use of their hereditary fishcamp, the passing on of his ancestral names to his biological and step-grandchildren and the sustained growth and development at Seabird Island. Perhaps most illustrative of his continued legacy is the unparalleled success the Seabird Island Community has achieved in terms of community-based education since his death. Archie shared his vision for the future of his community in one of our interviews, saying he hoped to see the ongoing promotion of trades and technical skills and that he would like to see a college on reserve, as well as a seniors' home and a museum.

Since his passing, Seabird Island has continued to be a leader in First Nations education. In 2010, the Seabird College and Adult Education Centre opened. Chief Clem Seymour noted that, "(t)he College partnered with our School this first year...the end result is worthwhile. We follow our traditions and culture - encourage and strengthen our peoples' capacity of decision making in education, life and community."⁸³⁷ Carolyne Neufeld, Dean of the Seabird College, further states that "the Band started the college in our community to help students overcome barriers to success which they experienced in off-site institutes."⁸³⁸ In 2011, the College graduated 49 students, a record-breaking success in First Nations education."⁸³⁹ Daryl McNeil, Band manager, said in a recent newspaper article: "(t)his unique and collaborative approach of

⁸³⁷ <http://www.fnbc.info/seabird-island-college> (download date September 13, 2013).

⁸³⁸ <http://www.theprogress.com/community/124500778.html> (download date September 21, 2013).

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

the College and Community School has been successful in providing education and training to First Nations who would otherwise not have enrolled in off-site public institutes.”⁸⁴⁰ The article goes on to state that “(f)orty-nine adult graduates in one year is a record-breaking success for our adult learners”⁸⁴¹ and that “(t)he college also provides a broad range of employment services and technical training, including career/employment assessment and counseling, employment readiness, academic upgrading, work placement, and monitoring services.”⁸⁴² Finally, the article observes that: “(s)tudents need cultural, community and family supports in order to reach their dreams. With the opening of Seabird College, we are able to provide these supports close to home.”⁸⁴³ Archie’s descendants who carry his ancestral names, Kelsey Charles (*Texeyelh*), and Zack Joe (*Nwéwtm*) both graduated with high honours in 2014 from the welding program.

Archie’s legacy is one based on self-determination in every sense. He chose a strategy of inclusion and education to ensure the protection of Stó:lō culture. He chose Stó:lō and *Xwelítem* tools and allies strategically throughout his life (scholars, governments, families) who supported his goal of protection and promotion of Stó:lō culture. The level of agency and flexibility with which Archie lived is also apparent in the personal choice he made to live common-law with his soul mate, Tina Jack, despite the pressure that existed in his generation as a member of the Roman Catholic Church to marry. Attempting to balance traditional and Indian Act-imposed governance practices as he did, Archie’s statement “we’re all equal” translated to his

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

⁸⁴² Ibid.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

encouragement of unity among Stó:lō people in a time when Stó:lō politics (and Indigenous politics, more broadly) were in significant transition. But even more broadly, he balanced being an ardent protector of the rights of his people with his belief in equality which extended to acceptance of all peoples. In the realm of work, he held himself, his family and community to a high standard; carrying forward the teachings of his adoptive parents who taught him that work, particularly using local resources was for him and his people, linked to self-determination. He fought to accomplish this goal by creating on-reserve employment, the cultivation of Seabird Island land for farming and ranching, sustainable housing and education for his people. He wanted his people to have the tools in hand to live the life they chose.

Finally, the recording of his life history can translate into practical ways. Archie's leadership strategy, whether applied as *Sia:teleq* managing his family fishcamp or as Chief of Seabird Island, provides a powerful example of a form of community development and conflict resolution that worked. The efficacy of his strategy was apparent in its success and as such it serves as a model that could profitably inspire continued reflection. Archie's final spoken words, expressed in his living will and testament, concisely sum up his legacy and provide insight into the teachings he hoped to pass on: "Share and share alike. Family treat each other fair and square."⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁴ Caroline Credico, interview with Meagan Gough, May 28, 2014.

FIGURES



Figure 1.1 Archie Charles and Meagan Gough at Archie's Home on Seabird Island, 2006.



Figure 2.1 Archie Charles' Biological Father, Edward "Eddie" Coombs.

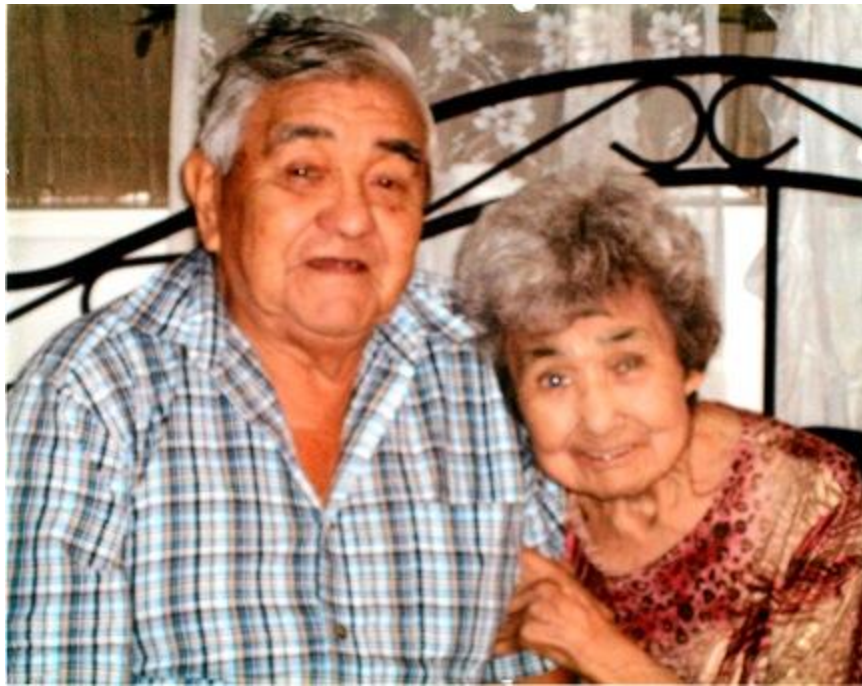


Figure 2.2 Archie Charles and Biological Sister Dorothy Leon (née Sepass). At Dorothy's Home on Katsie Reserve, 2008.



Figure 2.3 Mary and Dave Charles, circa 1950s.



Figure 2.4 Josephine Seymour, Mary Charles (on left) with Archie in Background Holding the Horse at Agassiz Fair, 1927.

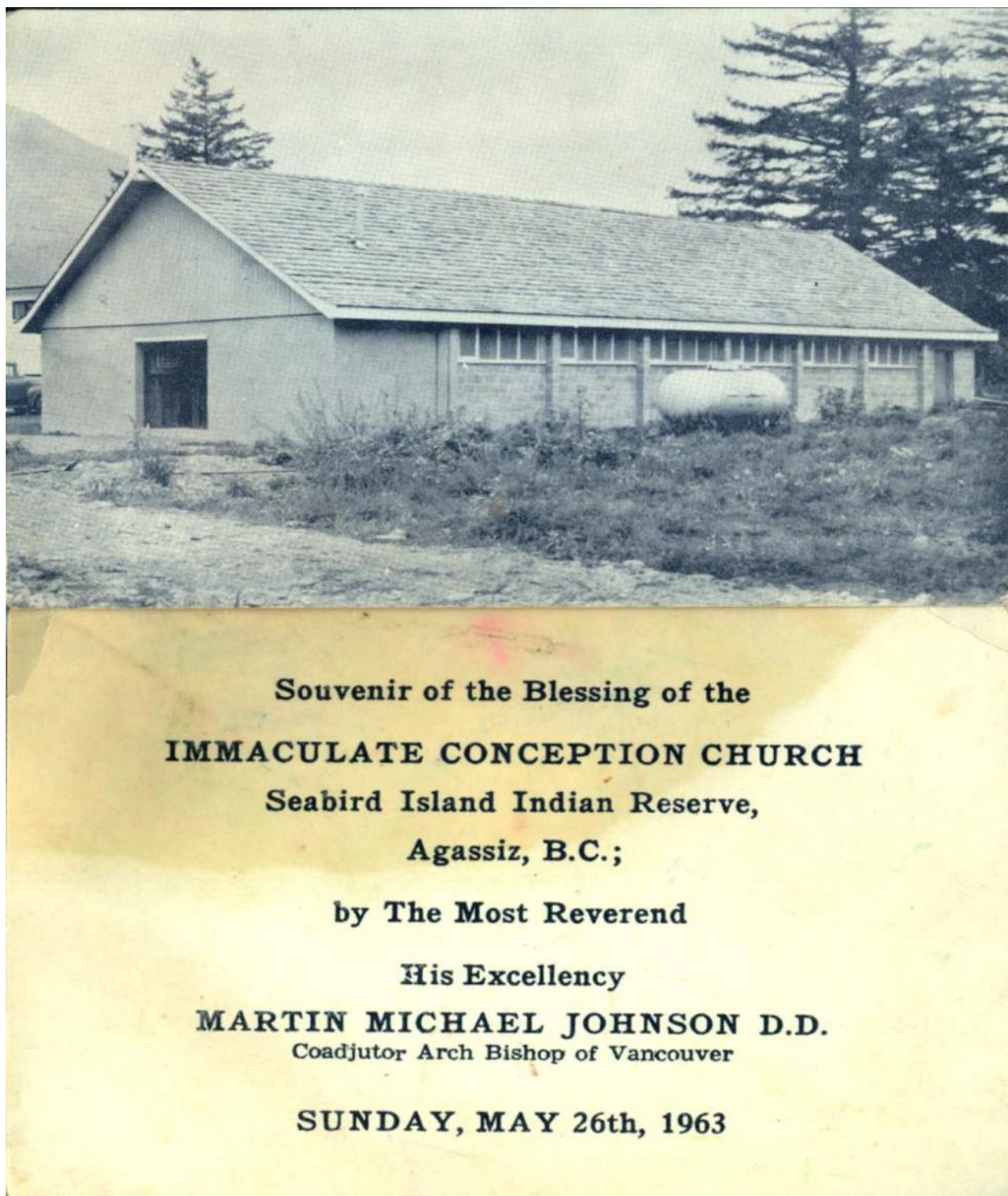


Figure 2.5 Seabird Island Immaculate Conception Church, 1963.



Figure 3.1 Kamloops Indian Residential School, Kamloops, British Columbia. (Photo courtesy of www.irsr.ca)



Figure 3.2 Mary Charles circa 1960s.



Figure 3.3 Seabird Island School (*Lalme' Iwesawtexw*), circa 1995. (Photo from *A Coast-Salish Historical Atlas*, 2001, 38)

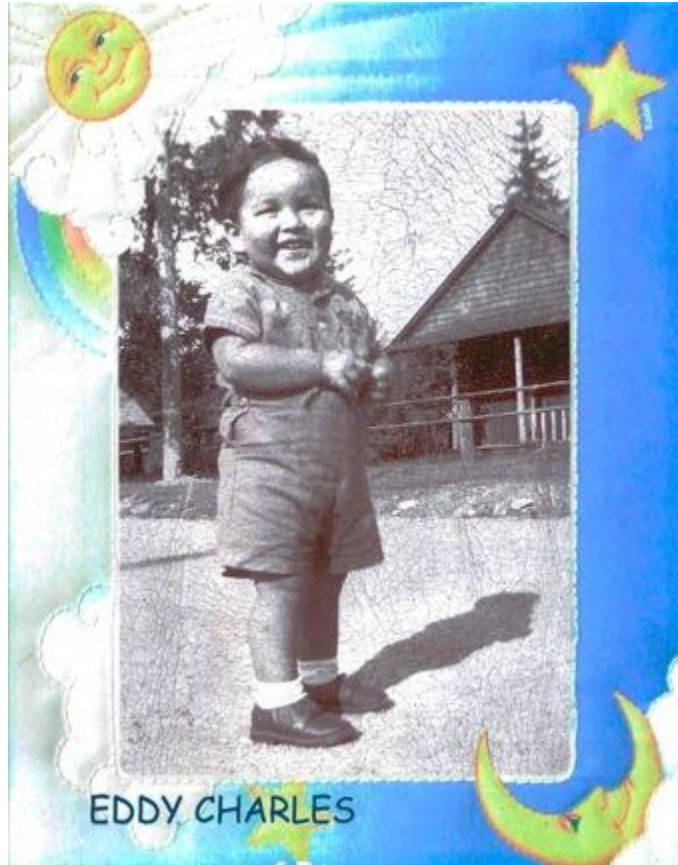


Figure 4.1 Archie Charles' Biological Son, Edward "Eddy" Charles. Hope, British Columbia, circa 1943.



Figure 4.2 Archie Charles with Friend Pete Peters, Recently Out of School, circa 1938.



Figure 4.3 Archie Charles, Before Overseas Service, Seabird Island circa 1941.



Figure 4.4 Archie Charles and First Wife, Susan Pat, with Maria Slough Pictured in Foreground. Near Seabird Island, circa 1946.



Figure 4.5 Archie Charles and Friends During the Historic 1948 Flood.



Figure 4.6 Archie Charles, Remembrance Day Ceremony held at Stó:lō Nation Offices, Chilliwack, 2008.



Figure 5.1 Tina Jack (née Lewis), Age Thirteen. Chawathil Reserve, circa 1941.



Figure 5.2 Sonya Crey Wilson, Age 8 (on right), with Marion Wilson, Age 13.



Figure 5.3 “Playing Canoe”: (Back to front) Maggie Pat, Mary Crey, Jackie Kelly, Tina Jack (née Lewis) at Age Three. Chawathil Reserve, circa 1931.



Figure 5.4 Archie Charles in His Beloved Role Cooking Salmon in BBQ Pit at Seabird Island Festival, circa 1990's.



Figure 5.5 Archie Charles' Retirement as Chief of Seabird Island. In Front of His House on Seabird Island, 1998.



Figure 5.6 Order of Canada Ceremony, August 28, 2009, in Seabird Island. Front: Archie Charles, Tina Jack. Back (from left): Gwen Point and Honourable Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, Steven Point, Caroline Credico, Kelsey Charles, Meagan Gough, Rose Charles.

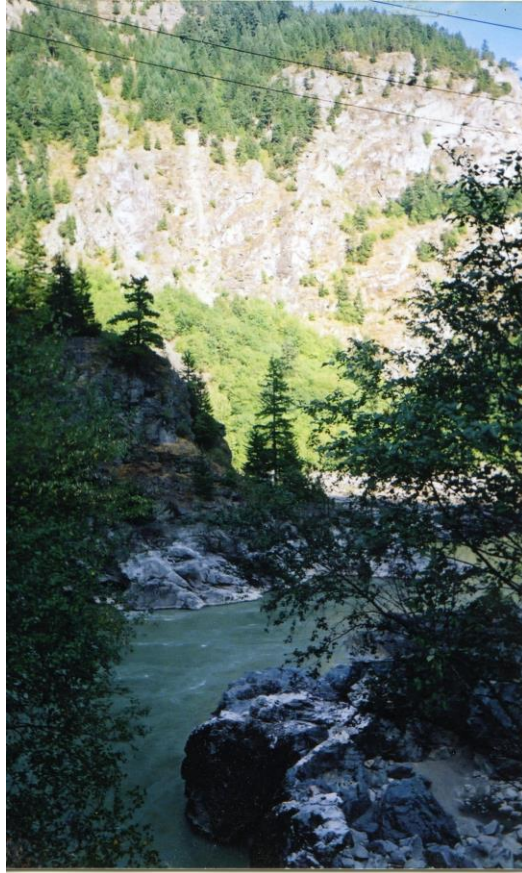


Figure 6.1 Near Archie's Fishcamp, Fraser Canyon British Columbia.



Figure 6.2 Mary Charles Cutting Fish at Fishcamp, circa 1960's.



Figure 6.3 Archie Charles Building a New Dryrack Structure, 1970.



Figure 6.4 Tina Jack's Canned Salmon From 2008 Fishing Season.



Figure 6.5 Tina Jack, Illustrating How to Can Salmon at Fishcamp, July 2007.



Figure 6.6 Archie Charles Checking Wind-Dried Salmon Strips, What He Called “Indian Candy”, Fishcamp, July 2009.



Figure 6.7 Archie Charles Harvesting Yew Wood Near Camp to Make Hoop for Fish Net, July, 2007.



Figure 6.8 Lewis George, Son of Tina Jack, Harvesting Berries and Spring Water at Fishcamp: One of Many Non-fishing Activities. July, 2007.



Figure 6.9 Archie Charles Tightening Canned Salmon Lids at Fishcamp with Great-Granddaughter Natasha (“Talks a Lot”) and Meagan Gough, July 2008.



Figure 6.10 Meeting Between Stó:lō Fishing Families and DFO, Held at Archie's Fishcamp, 1998.



Figure 7.1 Gathering in Front of Archie and Tina's Home in Seabird Island, 2009. (From left to right): Thomas Crey, Rose Charles, Caroline Credico, Natasha John, Irene George, Tina Jack, Archie Charles, Meagan Gough, Lewis George.



Figure 7.2 Meagan Gough Eating Salmon Eyeball, Fishcamp July, 2007.

Glossary of Halq'eméylem Terms, People, and Place Names

Aboriginal Pronunciation Guide

There are sounds in Halkomelem that are distinct from those in English. To accommodate these (in a way that would avoid the esoteric symbols used in the international phonetic alphabet and thereby allow people to type the words on a standard typewriter or with a basic word processor), the linguist Brent Galloway and elders with the Coqualeetza Centre worked together in the 1970s to devise a practical orthography for upriver Halkomelem (Halq'eméylem). This system of writing has been adopted by the Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Councils. The following pronunciation guide is an abridged version of that found in Galloway's chapter 'The Significance of the Halkomelem Language Material,' in Oliver Wells, ed., *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbors* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 23–7. Where possible, I have used this orthography throughout the volume.

Halq'eméylem Vowels

- a as in English 'fat,' 'bat' (when under ´ or before w or y) or as in English 'sell,' 'bet' (elsewhere)
- e as in English 'sill,' 'bill' (when between palatal sounds l, lh, x, y, s, ts, ts', k, k') or as in English 'pull,' 'bull' (when between labialized sounds m, w, kw, kw', qw, qw', xw, xw) or as in English 'mutt,' 'what' (elsewhere)
- i as in English 'antique,' 'beet,' 'eel'
- o as in English 'pot,' 'mop,' 'father,' 'brother'
- ō as in English 'no,' 'go,' 'crow'
- u as in English 'Sue,' 'soon,' 'moon,' 'flu'

APPENDIX A

Guide To Pronunciation Of Halq'eméylem. From Keith Thor Carlson's *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). With permission of author.

Glossary

Most vowels can be followed by [y] or [w] in the same syllable:

aw	as in English 'cow'
ay	as in some pronunciations of the English 'sang' or 'slang'
ew	as in English 'about'
ey	as in English 'bait'
iw	as in English 'peewee' minus the last 'ee'
iy	as in English 'beet'
ow	as in English 'ah well' minus the last 'ell'
oy	as in English 'bite'
ow	as in English 'bowl'

Stressed and Dragged-Out Vowels

Most Halq'eméylem words have a stressed vowel (e.g., á or í or ì). Stress marks indicate which part of the word is said louder and higher. Stress marks do not change the pronunciation of the vowel. The ´ accent indicates a high stress and is roughly four notes higher than an unstressed vowel. The ` accent indicated a mid stress – roughly two notes above an unstressed vowel. A colon ':' means that the preceding sound is dragged out twice as long as a sound without a colon.

Consonants Pronounced as in English

p	as in English 'pill'
t	as in English 'tick'
ch	as in English 'church'
ts	as in English 'rats'
k	as in English 'king'
kw	as in English 'queen' or 'inkwell'
th	as in English 'thin' (but not voiced as in 'this' or 'the')
sh	as in English 'shine'
s	as in English 'sill'
h	as in English 'hat'
m	as in English 'man'
n	as in English 'nod.' Note this sound appears in the downriver and Vancouver islands dialects of Halkomelem and not in upriver Halq'eméylem where it is replaced by 'l'
l	as in English 'land'
y	as in English 'yes' or 'say'

APPENDIX A

Guide To Pronunciation Of *Halq'eméylem* (Continued).

Glossary

w as in English 'wood' or 'how'

Consonants that Do Not Appear in English

- q made by raising the very back of the tongue to touch the soft palate
- qw made just like the q but with rounded lips
- lh made by putting the tongue in position to say an 'l' but then blowing air around the sides of the tongue as if pronouncing an 'h.' As in the English 'k' sound found in 'clean' or 'climb.'

Pops (Glottal Stops)

A sound followed by an apostrophe (as follows the st in the Halq'eméylem word st'exem) indicates a pop or what linguists refer to as a glottal stop. It is found in a few English words such as 'mutton' or 'button.' It follows many vowels in Halq'eméylem as well as the following ten consonants: ch', k', kw', p', q', t', th', ts', tl'. The 'th' sound occurs in English words such as 'width' or 'breadth.'

Blow Sounds

There are four blown 'x' sounds. These sound nothing like the 'z' sound that 'x' sometimes makes in English words. Rather, in Halq'eméylem these sounds are made by raising the tongue to narrow the passage of air till the friction of the air is heard.

- x made with the middle of the tongue raised roughly in the same place as it is put to make a 'y' as in 'yawn.' But instead of articulating a sound the speaker just blows air so as to produce a friction sound in the middle of the tongue and the front of the roof of the mouth. As in the first sound of the English words 'Hugh' or 'hew.'
- xw made with the tongue raised a little further back by the middle of the roof of the mouth, but with rounded lips. This is similar to the 'wh' in English but with more friction on the roof of the mouth.
- ḡ made still farther back with the back of the tongue raised close to the roof of the mouth where the 'q' is made. German has this in 'ach' and Scottish has it in 'lock' meaning 'lake.'
- ḡw made in the same back place as ḡ, but with rounded lips. It is like a blown qw while ḡ is like a blown q.

APPENDIX A

Guide To Pronunciation Of *Halq'eméylem* (Continued).

APPENDIX B

Chronology of Life Events

1922 on August 28, Archibald “Archie” Coombs is born to Eddie Coombs and Mary May Sepass.

1924 Eddie Coombs dies May 28 in Deroche, British Columbia. Shortly thereafter Archie is adopted by Mary and Dave Charles of Seabird Island, British Columbia and renamed Archie Charles.

1928 January 20, Christina “Tina” Jack (née Lewis), life partner of Archie Charles is born in Hope, B.C.

1929-1938 Archie attends Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia.

1941 Biological son Edward “Eddy” Charles born to Archie Charles and partner Mary “Mamie” Crey.

1942 May 11, Archie enlists with Army, completing basic training for infantry in New Westminster in 1942.

1943 Biological son Eddy Charles dies in house fire.

1944 March 18, Archie commences active service as part of Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (“PPCLI”).

1945 April 13 to July 17, Archie engages in active service overseas in England and Netherlands.

1945 May 5, Allied victory in Europe.

1946 August 24, Archie Charles discharged from Army.

1946 Archie Charles Marries Susan Pat Charlie.

1951 Amendment to *Indian Act* includes lifting of Potlatch Ban.

1953 Biological daughter Sonya Crey Wilson born to Mary Crey.

1958 Seabird Island becomes amalgamation of 7 bands.

Early 1960’s (exact dates unknown) wife Susan Pat and Archie separate, short time after Archie and partner Tina Jack commence common-law partnership that lasts until his death in 2010. Shortly after meeting they both quit drinking alcohol.

1961 Archie works under the supervision of adoptive father Dave Charles to help build the new Roman Catholic Church of Immaculate Conception at Seabird Island.

1969 First Annual Seabird Island Festival Archie hosts Salmon BBQ.

1970 Archie elected Chief of Seabird Island.

1974 January 3, Archie's biological daughter Sonya Crey Wilson is found dead.

1974 Archie and Tina adopt Archie's biological granddaughter, Sonya Crey's daughter Rosealee, age 6 months. She would be one of 18 foster, step and grandchildren they adopted and raised.

1976 Stó:lō occupation of Coqueleetza grounds, former residential school: Archie participates as Chief.

1978 Kamloops IRS, the residential school Archie attended, closes.

1980 Elders fishcamp takes place in Fraser Canyon.

1991 Seabird Island Community School "*Lalme' Iwesawtexw*", meaning "House of Learning" opens while Archie is Chief. Named after Mary Charles, it realizes Archie and Mary's shared dream of First Nation's band-controlled education.

1993 Stó:lō Tribal Council hosts the first Remembrance Day Ceremony for Stó:lō veterans, Archie and other veterans attend.

1993 Archie Charles Chief of Seabird Island and half-brother and Chief of Kwantlen Joe Gabriel nominated first Stó:lō "Grand Chiefs" by Stó:lō Tribal Council leadership.

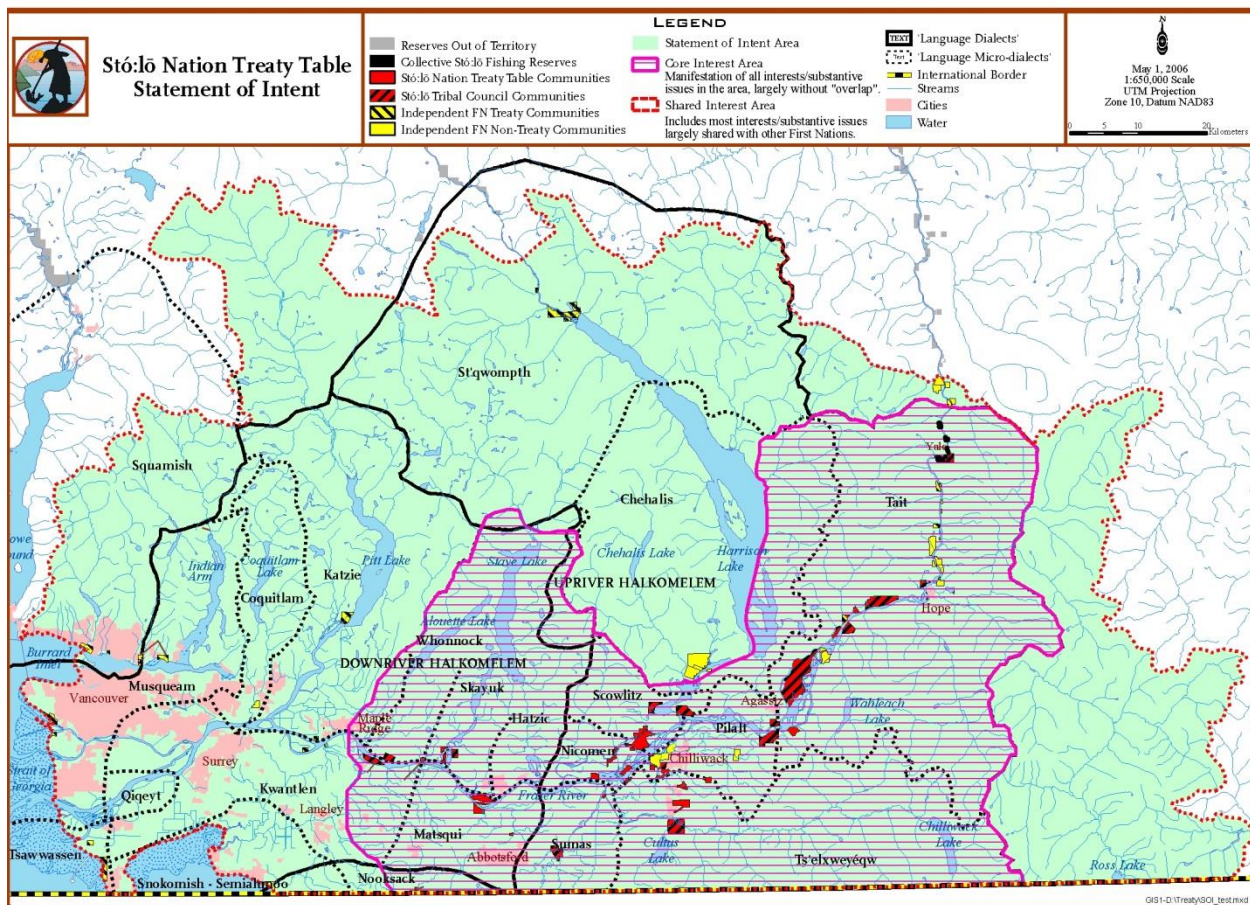
1998 Department of Fisheries and Oceans ("DFO") meeting with Chiefs and fisherman hosted at Archie's fishcamp in Fraser Canyon, BC.

1998 Archie retires after 14 consecutive two-year terms as Chief of Seabird Island.

2009 August 28, Archie is bestowed with the Governor General's Order of Canada award in a ceremony in Seabird Island attended by hundreds of community members, Chiefs and diplomats.

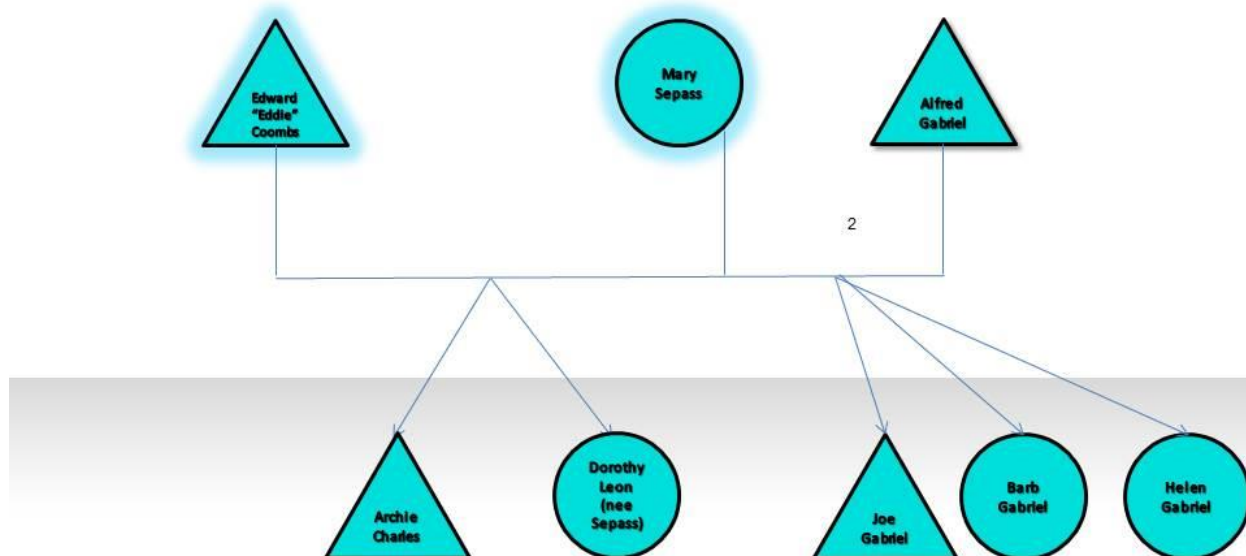
2010 November 30, Archie Charles dies in Chilliwack, British Columbia.

2014 November 29, Archie Charles Memorial Potlatch is held at the Charlie Longhouse in Chehalis, B.C.



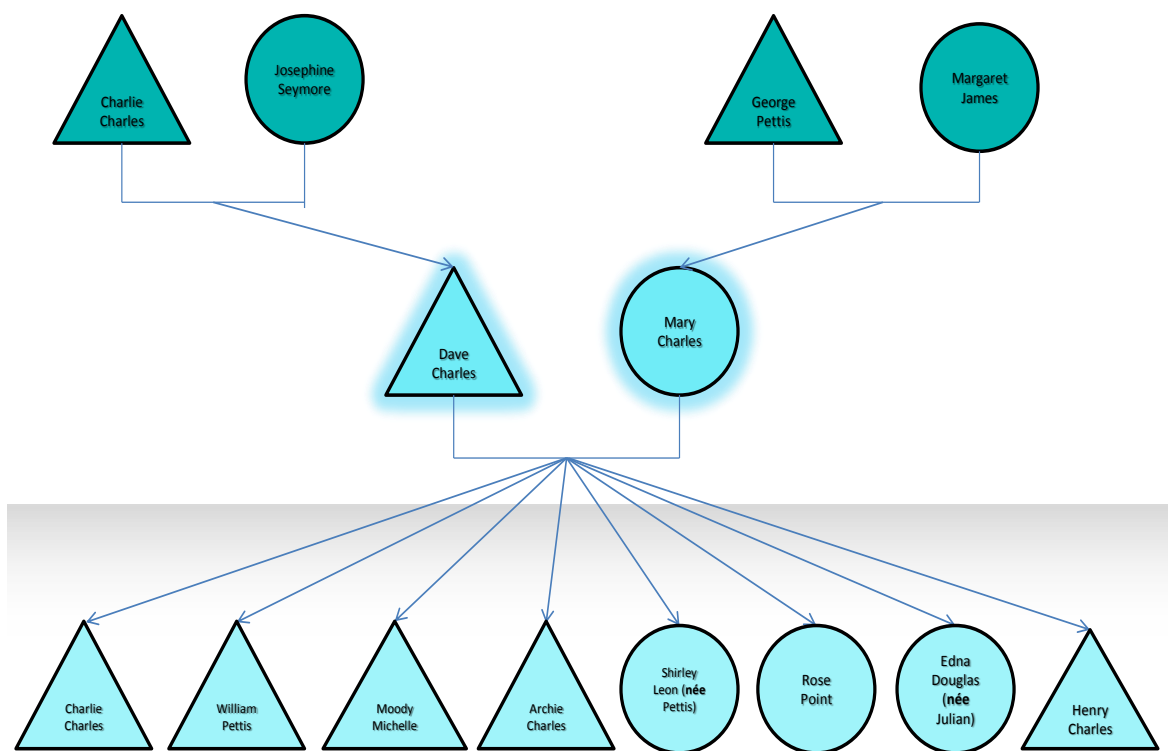
APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C - Map of Stó:lō Statement of Intent. (Chilliwack, B.C.: Stó:lō Nation May 1, 2006).



APPENDIX D

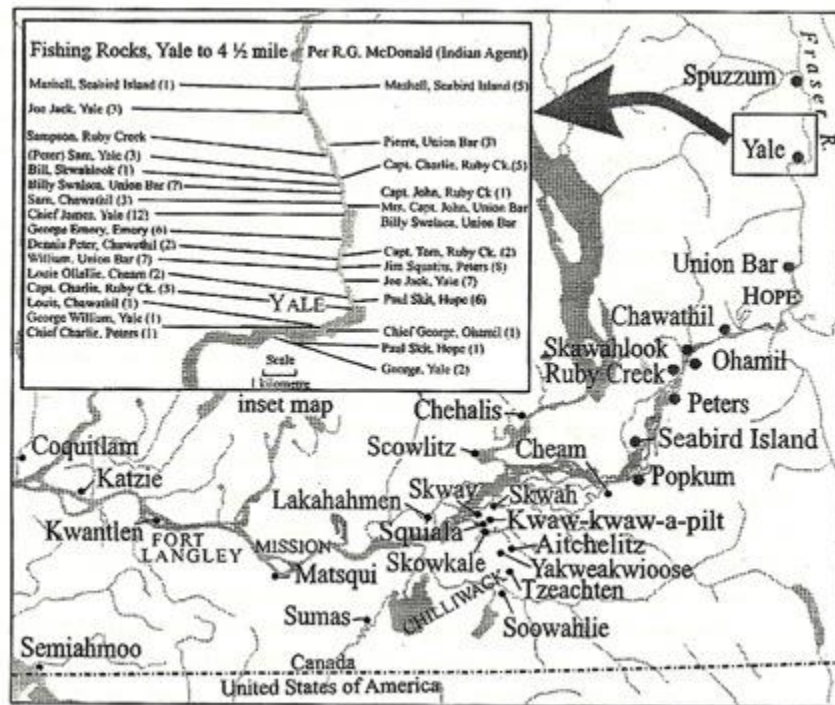
Archie Charles' Ascending Biological Genealogy Chart.



APPENDIX E-Archie Charles Ascending Adoptive Genealogy

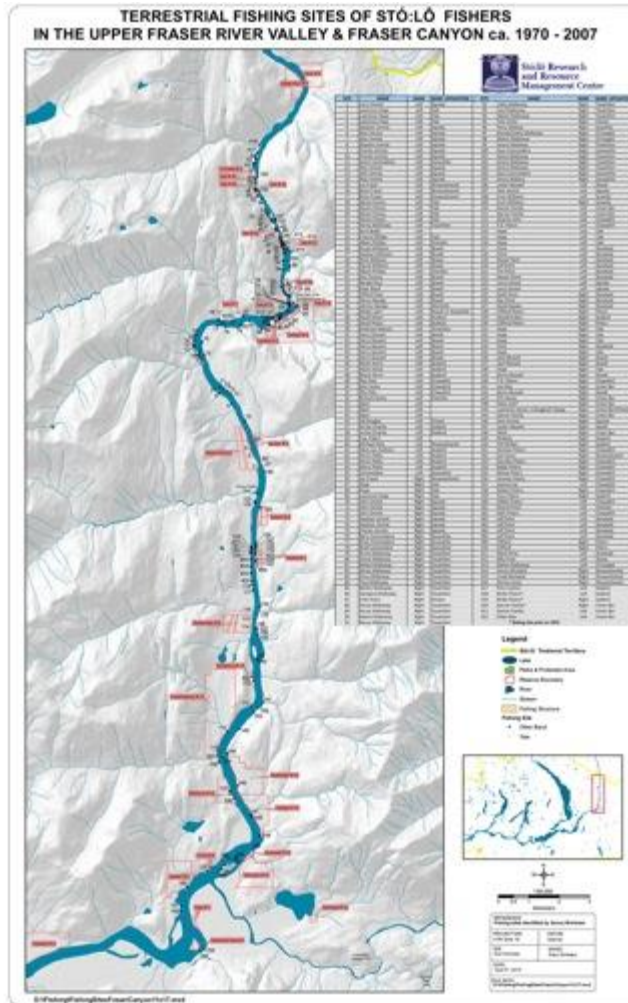
APPENDIX E

Archie Charles' Ascending Adoptive Genealogy Chart.



APPENDIX F

Valley Owners of Fishing Sites, Prepared by Ted Binnema. From Keith Thor Carlson's "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," in *New Histories for Old*, edited by Ted Binnema and S. Neyland (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 165.



APPENDIX G

Terrestrial Fishing Sites of Stó:lō Fishers in Upper Fraser River Valley and Fraser Canyon 1970-2007. Prepared by Sue Formosa, SRRMC. (Chilliwack, B.C.: Stó:lō Nation SRRMC Department, April 27, 2010). Archie is listed as caretaker of sites #57 and #58.

APPENDIX H

Tina Jack's Salmon Canning Instructions, as Told to Meagan Gough, 2007.

1. Boil cans and lids, wash and dry.
2. Get sharp knife, cardboard to cut on and toss away after.
3. Put ¼ teaspoon of salt in jars before fish.
4. Cut along backbone of fish, touching the bone on each side from the top to tail fin. Will leave inner back bone as a third piece (can be wind dried).
5. Cut off fins, tail.
6. Scoop out any remaining bloodline, dry inside and out with towel (scoop with a spoon).
7. NO WATER ALLOWED ON FISH EVER.
8. Cut strips the size of bottle, measuring from bottom lip of bottle to bottom, then use strips to measure.
9. Depending on length (width) of strip, open two (or three) slits so it can bend in jar.
10. Place in jar meat side out (skin in).
11. Wipe lid of jar with paper towel to remove any excess debris.
12. Seal TIGHTLY.
13. Repeat.
14. Cook for 3 hours on stove in water bath to seal.

TO COOK HALF PINTS – 3 hours until finished

NEVER LET WATER BOIL DOWN OR JARS WILL CRACK.

1. Place in large pot.
2. Fill with water to bottom of lids.
3. Refill with boiling water every hour.
4. Check water each half hour.
5. Add wood every half hour to ensure boiling continues.
6. When time is up, remove from heat, let stand uncovered in pot for six hours. Will hear lids pop if not sealed properly. Should leave lids sealed (indented). If popped, DO NOT EAT. Wipe bottles with paper towel to remove.

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